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Cover photos of baseball stars Ross Wilson, Josh Rutledge and Brandon May, and softball star Brittany Rogers courtesy University of Alabama

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Fellow Crimson Tide Fans,

Ah, spring! Once upon a time the return of the robins was accompanied by the crack of the bat, now turned to "Ping!" Although baseball is known as the Summer Game, it is the nature of college athletics that baseball and softball (which is about as popular on many campuses, including The Capstone) are played in the spring.

There are many things about the college athletics calendar that could be improved, including moving baseball and softball to later starts. Even in Alabama it can be chilly in February; imagine what it's like in the North.

College baseball and softball could be extended into the summer. Years ago, there was the feeling that college students wouldn't stay around in the summer to play ball. Now the only student-athletes who aren't on campus in the summer seem to be those who are away honing their skills in something like the many summer amateur baseball leagues.

College presidents do a lot of huffing about athletes missing class. (Believe it or not, that's one of the reasons they give for not supporting a college football playoff at the highest level, even though lower levels of football have playoffs and even though football players miss less class than any other athletes.)

Having baseball and softball begin later in the spring and extend into the summer would cut down on missed classes by those athletes.

Perhaps the biggest need of a schedule adjustment is in basketball. The best thing that could happen in that sport would be to move it to a one-semester sport. Don't start games until after the college football season is completely over. Basketball players miss a lot of class, but they wouldn't miss any in the fall semester if games started in January. That might be a little tough on those schools that have terrible football and excellent basketball, but we've noticed that a lot of early college basketball games are sparsely attended. We have noticed that particularly in Alabama's Coleman Coliseum.

We'd lose the March Madness catchphrase, but some slick ad guy could probably come up with something for April. Brackets would still work.

Incidentally, lest anyone think a change in the basketball "season" would diminish the sport, the idea of making college basketball a one semester sport comes from C.M. Newton, the former Crimson Tide coach who is a member of the Basketball Hall of Fame and considered to be the most influential person regarding United States basketball.

This is a busy time for college athletics. In addition to the start of spring sports, winter sports (notably basketball) are in full swing. And so is football recruiting–practically another spectator sport–with Signing Day the first Wednesday in February.

Spring football is just around the corner, and with Alabama having lost nine scholarshipped seniors and expected to sign quite a few more than that, competition in the spring could be spirited. It's almost like tryouts for some Crimson Tide football players since all scholarships have to be renewed in the summer.

A good place to think about these proposals is in the stands at an Alabama baseball or softball game. Particularly after it warms up a bit. ■

Sincerely,
Kirk McNair

Vol. 31, Issue 6 (ISSN 0195-0975 USPS 489-470) February, 2009
'BAMA, INSIDE THE CRIMSON TIDE magazine is published monthly, 10 times a year (September-June) by Scout Publishing, LLC 2003 Western Ave, Suite 700, Seattle, WA 98121. Basic subscription rate is $44.95. Single copy price is $4.95. **SUBSCRIBERS**: If the post office alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligations unless we receive a corrected address. **POSTMASTER**: Please send all change of address forms to: **'Bama, Inside the Crimson Tide** 1916 Pike Place, Suite 12-250, Seattle, WA 98101-1097. Periodicals postage paid at Seattle, WA and additional mailing offices. Please allow three weeks for change of address. Reproduction or use, in whole or in part, of editorial or graphic content in any manner is strictly prohibited without the prior express written permission of Scout Publishing. All letters to 'BAMA magazine will be treated as intended for publication and are subject to 'BAMA magazine's unrestricted right to edit. Publisher is not responsible for any unsolicited art, photographs or manuscripts. 'BAMA magazine is an independent source of news and features relating to Alabama athletic programs. Scout Publishing, 'BAMA magazine and their officers, directors and stockholders are not authorized, sponsored or sanctioned by any university, athletic conference, or athletic governing body or any of their agencies. © 2009 Scout Publishing, LLC and **'BAMA, INSIDE THE CRIMSON TIDE** magazine. All rights reserved.

University of Alabama

FOOTBALL *BY KIRK McNAIR*

Bryant-Denny Could Grow

Demand for tickets may mean expansion

No one tries to pretend that football at the level played by Alabama is not big business. It is. The head coach makes millions of dollars a year and the assistant coaches make hundreds of thousands. Alabama football funds all or part of virtually every other intercollegiate team on campus, provides a jet airplane that is used by The University administration and various departments, and funds salaries and scholarships on the academics side.

And Alabama has done this for decades without ever having taken any money from the general fund of the state or the university.

How does it do it? Television income and bowl revenue and the money from officially licensed products is major. But number one is football attendance and the contributions paid by those who want to be able to buy those tickets. There are all sorts of levels of Tide Pride membership, including skybox acquisition.

Alabama's Bryant-Denny Stadium brings in the cash with 92,138 seats. It is one of the largest college football stadiums in the nation.

A maxim of business–college athletics business–is that there is a benefit to having a tough ticket. All Alabama contributions and football ticket sales are acquired long before there is a game played in the fall. It is very rare for a Tide fan to fail to renew his football priority.

The biggest waste of money on the campus in Tuscaloosa was the installation of windows for ticket sales at Bryant-Denny Stadium. Alabama never plays to less than a sellout and the only ticket sales in the fall are by friends or scalpers.

As a measure of how tough the Alabama football ticket is, there is a waiting list for every level of Tide Pride membership. Checks

have been written in event a skybox becomes available. There are contributions made in hopes that if one of the 92,138 seats doesn't become available that the donor will be well placed should the stadium be expanded.

The north end zone of Bryant-Denny Stadium was enlarged to increase capacity to 92,138 before the 2006 season. From the time of the ribbon-cutting–maybe earlier–some were thinking about continued expansion. Alabama Athletics Director Mal Moore has overseen the greatest expansion and improvement of athletics department facilities in Crimson Tide history. He was aware of the interest in expansion, but also could point to the stadium being a "nice size" at 92,138.

Moore may have been reluctant to start the ball rolling on an additional expansion, but he is on board. And if that train hasn't started out of the station, it at least is gushing steam.

"We are continuing to explore the feasibility of stadium expansion," Moore said, "and want the Board to have the most information available at this time." He had also pointed out that when approval does come, he wants the plan to be up to speed.

In mid-November, at the request of University President Dr. Robert E. Witt, the University of Alabama board of trustees approved an expansion of the stadium to approximately 102,000. While the south end zone renovation would complement the north end zone, it would not be an exact replica. One proposal showed an expansion to include an 8,500-seat upper deck, an upper concourse with concessions stands, 34 skyboxes, two expanded skyboxes, a 1,700-seat capacity South Zone Club, a 1,500-seat capacity Stadium Club, a ground level souvenir-type store, offices, etc.

The current JumboTron scoreboard would be replaced by two video scoreboards as in the northeast and northwest corners. There would be some loss of current seats, but a net gain of nearly 10,000.

Although trustees approved an estimated cost, look and scope of a roughly 10,000-seat, $80.6 million addition to the stadium's south end zone (alongside Bryant Drive and across from Evergreen Cemetery), no construction contracts have been awarded. The proposed budget for the south end zone expansion, however, does include paying Birmingham-based Davis Architects a fee of $2.58 million for its work. That's the firm that planned the north end zone and using Davis for the south end zone expansion plan would save The University over $780,000, trustees were told.

The expansion has been included in the five-year facilities plan for two years. There is no timeline for construction. Several more votes will be needed before construction could begin.

Since the athletics department sustains itself, no state or taxpayer money will be used to pay for the expansion. The project will be funded by a bond issue of $80,609,846.

Expansion of the north end zone cost approximately $50 million.

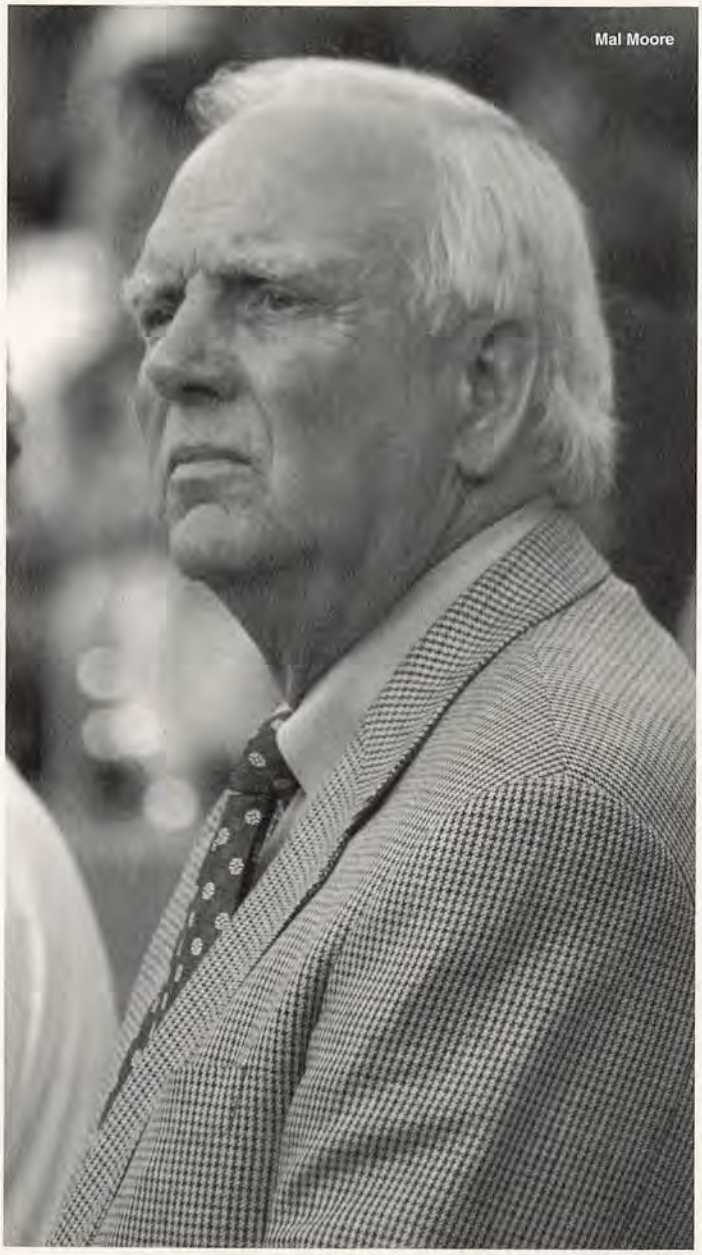
Previously the City of Tuscaloosa had made allowances in work on Bryant-Drive for the future expansion of Bryant-Denny Stadium.

Witt said if financial pieces fall perfectly, he'd like to have the addition ready for the 2010 season. That would mean construction would probably have to begin in the winter or spring of this year. Demand for tickets is too great to ignore, Witt said. "We've reached a point where it's not a question of if, but when, we can go forward with this project," Witt told trustees.

The annual cost of operating an expanded south end zone is estimated to be $7.7 million, but it's predicted to bring in $9.2 million through ticket sales, according to board documents. When the bond issue is retired, the income from the additional seats skyrockets to over $9 million–just on those south end zone seats.

The addition will also help Witt meet his goal of having tickets available for all University students who want them. Enrollment at The Capstone is over 27,000 and will be over 28,000 next fall.

Bryant-Denny is the eighth-largest on campus football stadium in the nation. Penn State ranks first at 107, 282, followed by Michigan 106,201, Ohio State 102,329, Tennessee 102,037, Texas 94,113, Georgia 92,746, LSU 92,400 and Alabama. An upcoming renovation of Tennessee's Neyland Stadium is expected to lower capacity there to about 100,000, so the proposed expansion of Bryant-Denny would make it the largest in the Southeastern Conference and fourth largest in the nation. ■


Mal Moore

University of Alabama

Offense Is Key

Tide has experience plus good newcomers

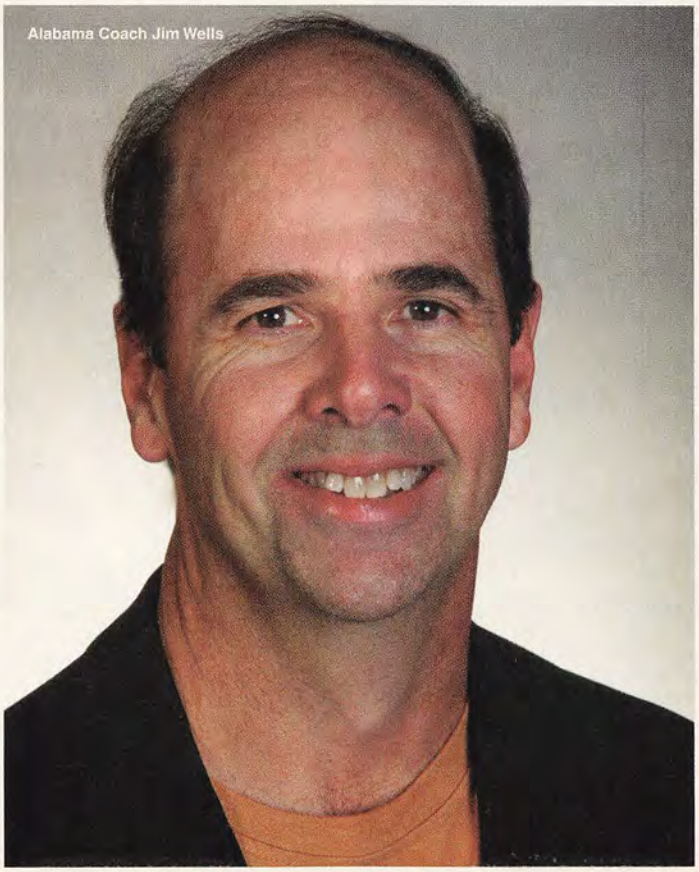
The Alabama baseball team returns a veteran squad that includes a 10-man senior class and one the nation's top recruiting classes. With a good mix of experience and new talent, Alabama Coach Jim Wells has reason to smile as he enters his 15th season in the Crimson Tide dugout.

Alabama returns 12 players who started at least 15 games last season, including eight players with 40 or more starts during last year's 35-28 season that ended with another NCAA Tournament berth.

The Crimson Tide's returnees account for more than 70 per cent of last year's offense, including 65.5 per cent of the home runs, 71.2 per cent of the RBI, 76.1 per cent of the total hits and 77.5 per cent of the runs scored last season.

"The fact that all the position players are back with the exception of catcher (Alex Avila) and first base (Matt Bentley) is a good thing," Wells said after his team wrapped up six weeks of fall practice that included 14 intrasquad games and the annual fall world series. "There is a lot of familiarity. We went a long way to getting them ready, but we still have a ways to go."

Alabama returns second baseman Ross Wilson, All-America shortstop Josh Rutledge and third baseman Jake Smith on the infield.



Alabama Coach Jim Wells

University of Alabama

Wilson, the brother of Bama's football quarterback, 2006-08, John Parker Wilson, hit .295 (76 for 258) last season with an Alabama freshman record-tying 15 home runs and 47 RBI. He was also named to the 2008 Conway (South Carolina) Regional Team, after swatting three home runs in three NCAA Regional games for the Tide.

Rutledge was 2008 Louisville Slugger/Collegiate Baseball Freshman All-America after hitting a team-best .369 (99-for-268) with 31 RBI and 62 runs scored. He is the first freshman to lead Alabama in hitting since David Magadan posted a freshman school-record .389 batting average in 1981. Rutledge also led the Southeastern Conference with 91 hits during the regular season and set the UA freshman record for longest hitting streak.

Smith is a standout defensive third baseman and earned a spot on the 2008 SEC All-Defensive Team as a sophomore after making just 10 errors in 63 games. He also hit .240 with eight home runs and 34 RBI last season, but was one of the Tide's most improved offensive players this fall.

Another standout player is junior Brandon May, who can play a number of positions and will hit in the middle of the lineup once again. A 2008

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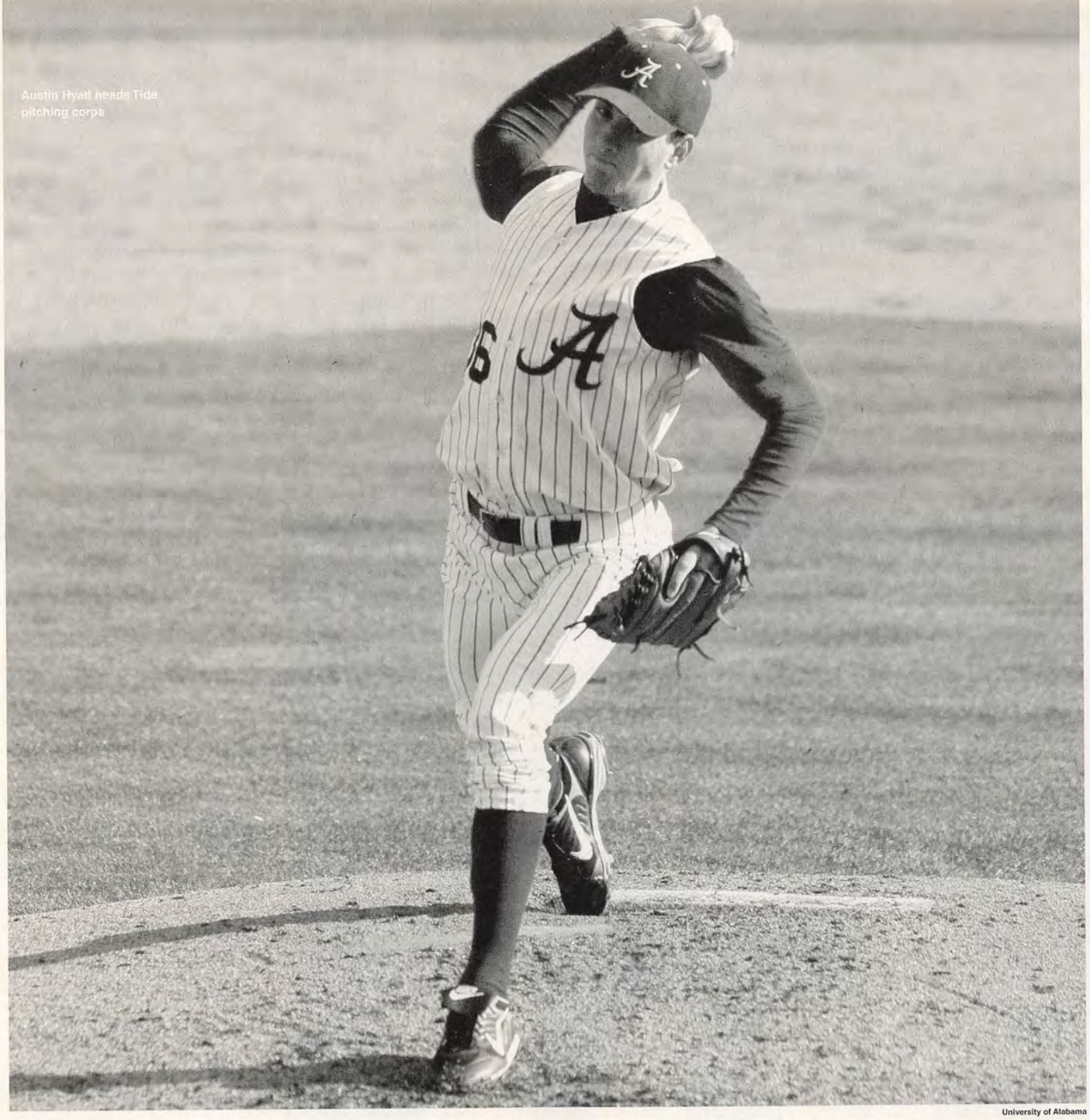
All-SEC selection, May worked at first base, left field, right field and designated hitter this fall. A solid offensive player with power, May was second on the team with a .365 (92-for-262) average last season with nine home runs and 50 RBI. He led the Tide with 18 doubles and scored 60 runs.

Senior Wes Henderson and junior college transfer Clay Jones will complete for the starting job at first base. Henderson hit .312 (11-for-29) with two home runs and five RBI in 21 games last season, mainly as a defensive specialist at first base. Jones hit a whopping .394 (172-for-436) with 18 home runs and 111 RBI in two years at Shelton State Community College. He was an American Baseball Coaches Association (ABCA) All-America in 2007 and led the Bucs to back-to-back National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) World Series appearances in 2007 and 2008. His younger brother, Ben, is true freshman and starting center at the University of Georgia.

Replacing Avila behind the plate will fall on the shoulders of seniors Kyle Moore and Vin DiFazio and junior Cody Trotter. Moore played in 22 games last season and made 15 starts. He hit .322 with one home run and eight RBI and showed a steady hand behind the plate this fall. DiFazio has essentially missed the last two seasons with numerous injuries, but was the catching surprise of fall camp

Jake Smith is outstanding third baseman

University of Alabama



Austin Hyatt heads Tide pitching corps

University of Alabama

with his ability to throw runners out. Trotter is a transfer from Itawamba (Mississippi) Community College, where he hit .293 with four home runs and 38 RBI in 78 games.

The outfield has a lot of talent and experience, with seniors Alex Kubal, Kent Matthes, Tyler Odle, and Ryan Rhoden, along with freshman Taylor Dugas.

Kubal and Matthes are both solid defenders as well as offensive threats. Kubal hit .329 (48-for-126) in 54 games last season with four home runs and 23 RBI. He was also one of the league's top defenders who can cover a lot of ground in centerfield. Matthes is also one of the league's top outfielders as evidenced by his numerous highlight-reel catches in right field over the course of the last three years. In addition to his team-leading seven outfield assists, Matthes hit .303 with 11 home runs and 52 RBI, one of his most productive offensive seasons at UA.

Odle and Rhoden provide veteran leadership and could also be valuable assets off the bench in key pinch-hitting roles. Odle hit .288 with four home runs and 24 RBI in 48 games last season, while Rhoden hit .276 with one home run and 17 RBI in 32 games.

Dugas stood out among the newcomers with a tremendous fall in the outfield and at the plate. A 2008 Louisville Slugger/Collegiate Baseball High School All-America, Dugas posted a .518 (176-for-340) career batting average with 19 home runs and 159 RBI in four years at Teurlings Catholic high School in Lafayette, Louisiana. He

also scored 187 runs and added 51 doubles, 51 stolen bases and 17 triples in his prep career.

With the a veteran offensive unit returning for the 2009 season, the question this fall was how good will the Tide be on the mound. Like its offense, Alabama will have a good mix of veterans and newcomers that should produce positive results on the mound.

The Crimson Tide returns 71 per cent of its pitching wins from last season, plus 64.1 per cent of its appearances, 70.2 per cent of innings pitched, and 70.9 per cent of its strikeouts.

"The emphasis in the fall to me was getting the pitching in order," Wells said. "The two main things were catching and pitching and we've had improvements. So we are better now than we were then. We still have more to do. In this league you need a multitude of pitching and you need a steady hand behind the plate. I wouldn't say we are there yet, but we are better than we were."

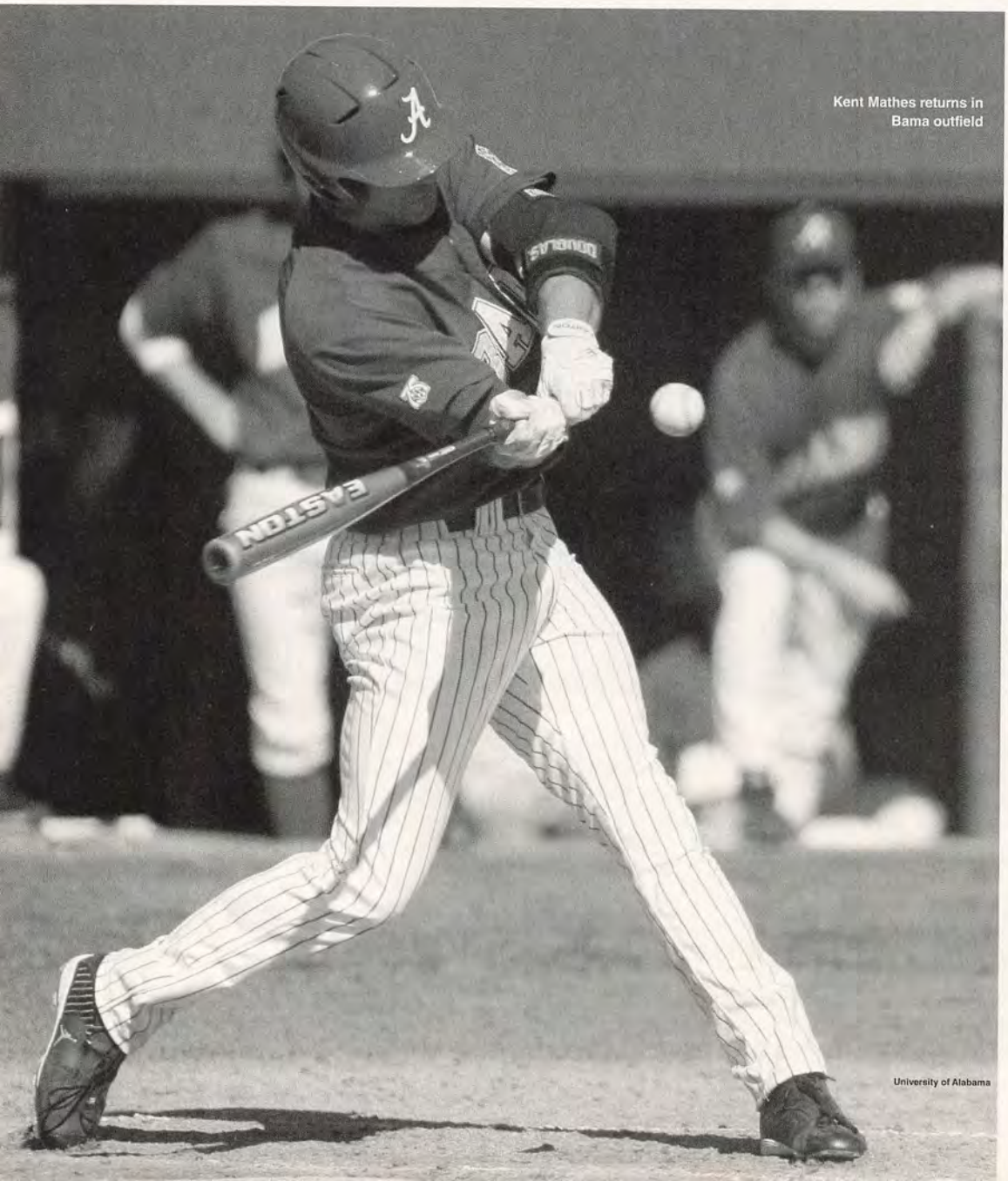
The Crimson Tide returns nine pitchers off last year's staff, including six with 14 or more appearances in 2008.

Seniors Austin Hyatt (17 G, 5-4, 4.53 ERA) and Miers Quigley (16 G, 5-4, 5.58 ERA) should be staples in the Tide's five-man rotation this season. Other potential starters are senior Casey Kebodeaux (15 G, 2-5, 6.64 ERA), junior Austin Graham (24 G, 6-2, 5.25 ERA, 4 SV), sophomore Jimmy Nelson (18 G, 3-3, 6.26 ERA) and true freshman Adam Morgan, a lefty, who had a stellar fall.

Nelson was rated as the number three prospect in the Texas Collegiate League this summer and may be more suited for a relief role this season.

The bullpen should be anchored by junior left-hander David Head, who could see action as both starter and reliever. A transfer from Chattahoochee Valley Community College, Head was 13-6 (.650) with a 2.97 ERA in his two-year career. He has the experience to step in and be a front-line pitcher this season.

Another lefty is junior Del Howell, who was voted the number one prospect in the Texas Collegiate League this summer. Howell compiled a 2-2 record and 2.41 ERA with four saves for the McKinney (Texas) Marshals this summer, where he earned a spot on the TCL All-Star Team. Howell is the Tide's lone two-way player and could see time in the outfield or as a left-hand hitting Designated Hitter or pinch-hitter.



Kent Mathes returns in Bama outfield

University of Alabama

A pair of Shelton State transfers could also bolster the UA pitching staff. Right-hander Adam Scott and left-hander Jonathan Smart pitched on back-to-back NJCAA World Series teams in 2007 and 2008. Scott was 13-5 (.722) with six saves and a 3.01 ERA in 55 career games for the Bucs. Smart, an ABCA First-Team All-America in 2007, was 19-4 (.826) with a 2.66 ERA in his junior college career. Smart missed the fall with an injury and his status for the season remains uncertain.

Scott Hays, a lefty from Odessa (Texas) College, will also compete for a role in the bullpen after a good fall.

The Crimson Tide will also have the services of sophomores Nathan Kilcrease, Austin Evans, Connor Hoehn and redshirt freshman Tyler White, who led the Wilmington (North Carolina) Sharks with 15.5 strikeouts per nine innings this summer in the wooden-bat Coastal Plain League. ■

2009 Alabama Baseball Roster

No.	Name	B-T	POS	HT	WT	CL	Exp.	Hometown (Last School)
1	Taylor Dugas	L-L	OF	5-7	165	Fr.	HS	Lafayette, La. (Tuerlings Catholic)
2	Josh Rutledge	R-R	SS	6-0	185	So.	1L	Cullman
3	Ross Wilson	R-R	2B	5-11	185	So.	1L	Hoover
4	Brock Bennett	R-R	C	5-10	165	Jr.	SQ	Tucker, Ga. (Greater Atlanta Christian)
5	Alex Kubal	R-R	OF	5-11	190	Sr.	1L	Shorewood, Minn. (Gulf Coast CC)
6	Brandon May	R-R	INF/OF	6-0	200	Jr.	2L	Marietta, Ga. (Lassiter)
7	Miers Quigley	L-L	P	6-5	220	Sr.	2L	Roswell, Ga.
9	Del Howell (OF)	L-L	P/OF	6-3	200	Jr.	1L	Tuscaloosa (American Christian)
10	Kyle Moore	R-R	C	6-0	190	Sr.	3L	Wetumpka (Edgewater Academy)
11	Wes Henderson	R-L	1B	6-2	225	Sr.	3L	Oxford
14	Jake Smith	R-R	3B	6-2	190	Jr.	1L	Shannon (Hueytown)
15	Cody Trotter	R-R	C	6-1	175	Jr.	TR	Mantachie, Miss. (Itawamba CC)
16	Clay Jones	R-R	1B/C	6-1	220	Jr.	TR	Brent (Shelton State CC)
18	Adam Scott	R-R	P	6-1	185	Jr.	TR	Hueytown (Shelton State CC)
19	Brandt Hendricks	R-R	OF	6-1	205	Fr.	HS	Jay, Fla.
20	Connor Hoehn	R-R	P	6-2	200	So.	SQ	Damasucs, Md. (St. John's College HS)
21	Austin Evans	R-R	P	6-3	220	So.	1L	Tampa, Fla. (Chamberlain)
22	Kent Matthes	R-R	OF	6-2	220	Sr.	3L	Orlando, Fla. (Edgewater)
23	Tyler White	R-R	P	6-2	210	Fr.	RS	Brandon, Miss.
24	Vincent DiFazio	R-R	C	6-0	215	Sr.	SQ	Hampton, N.J. (Indian River CC)
25	Scott Hays	L-L	P	5-10	180	Jr.	TR	Round Rock, Texas (Odessa JC)
26	Jonathan Smart	L-L	P	6-0	170	Jr.	TR	Tuscaloosa (Shelton State CC)
27	Austin Graham	L-R	P	6-3	210	Jr.	1L	Hoover (Spain Park)
28	Nathan Kilcrease	R-R	P	5-6	160	So.	1L	Phenix City (Glenwood Academy)
29	Drew Brooks	L-L	P	5-8	170	Fr.	HS	Memphis, Tenn. (Christian Brothers)
31	Casey Kebodeaux	R-R	P	6-1	210	Sr.	1L	Mandeville, La.
32	Adam Morgan	L-L	P	6-1	180	Fr.	HS	Marietta, Ga. (Kell HS)
33	David Head	L-L	P	6-2	180	Jr.	TR	Ellenwood, Ga. (Chatahoocie Valley CC)
34	Ryan Rhoden	R-R	OF	6-0	215	Sr.	3L	Tuscaloosa (Paul Bryant)
35	Kent Myer	R-R	INF	5-11	180	Fr.	HS	Jackson
36	Austin Hyatt	R-R	P	6-3	205	Sr.	2L	Marietta, Ga. (Marietta HS)
37	Freiley Cox	R-R	INF	5-10	175	Jr.	TR	Tuscaloosa (Shelton State CC)
38	Cal Tinsley	R-R	INF	5-8	165	Jr.	TR	Tuscaloosa (Shelton State CC)
39	James Tullidge	R-R	INF	5-11	170	Fr.	RS	Tuscaloosa (Tuscaloosa Academy)
40	Jimmy Nelson	R-R	P	6-5	235	So.	1L	Niceville, Fla.
42	Jon Kelton	L-R	INF	6-0	185	Fr.	RS	LaGrange, Ga.
43	Tyler Odle	L-L	OF	5-11	205	Sr.	2L	Veastvia Hills
44	Matt Baca	R-R	1B	6-1	255	Fr.	HS	Round Rock, Texas (Stony Point HS)
45	Troy Sutherland	R-R	P	6-3	245	Fr.	HS	Madison (Bob Jones)
46	Kelby Deerman	L-L	P	5-11	170	Fr.	HS	Owens Cross Roads (Madison Academy)

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VOLUNTEER COACH: Drew French • STUDENT ASSISTANT: Josh Copeland

Fantasy Land

by Roger Rotter
Fox Sports Fantasy Expert

Need something to fill the void between football season and, well, the next football season. Then try your hand at Fox Fantasy Baseball. Baseball worked for Bo Jackson, Deion Sanders and Brian Jordan, and FOX Fantasy is sure it will work for you.

Jed Jacobsohn/Getty

Top sleepers (non-rookies)

Top 2008 rookies like Evan Longoria, Geovany Soto, Jay Bruce, Joey Votto, Alexei Ramirez and Jacob Ellsbury had the opportunity to produce over full seasons. Check out these mostly second-year players who will be given a chance to play full-time from the start of 2009 and produce full-season stats worthy of a fantasy starter.

Chris Davis, 1B/3B, Texas
At just 22, he's already compiled an impressive résumé of power and average as a pro. Davis hit 36 homers with 118 RBI, 90 runs and a .297 average splitting at two levels (A+ and AA) in 2007. Then he hit 23 homers with 73 RBI, 68 runs, seven stolen bases and a .333 average in 77 games between Double-A and Triple-A last year. After his June call-up to the majors, Davis hit 17 homers with 55 RBI, 51 runs and a .285 average in just 80 games, in addition to 23 doubles. Those stats project to 34 homers, 47 doubles, 111 RBI and 103 runs for a full season. He also generated a strong .549 slugging percentage and impressive .880 OPS as just a rookie. He's expected to play first base for Texas, but is also eligible at third base after playing 32 games at that spot. Texas' hitter-friendly park helps ensure that his strong power stats will continue.

Mike Aviles, SS, Kansas City
He displayed the ability to hit in the majors, batting .325 in 102 games with the Royals. He also hit 10 homers with 51 RBI, 68 runs and eight stolen bases. Those stats project to 16 homers, 81 RBI, 108 runs and 13 stolen bases over a full season. Aviles has surprising power for a shortstop as only five shortstops slammed 15 or more homers last season (Hanley Ramirez, J.J. Hardy, Jhonny Peralta, Stephen Drew and Jose Reyes).

Shin-Soo Choo — Otto Greule Jr/Getty

Shin-Soo Choo, OF, Cleveland
A native of South Korea, Choo blossomed into a productive starter last season. He showed the ability to hit for power and average, in addition to flashing some speed. He hit 14 homers with 66 RBI, 68 runs and four stolen bases in 94 games. He also had a solid .397 on-base percentage (helped by 44 walks) and a .549 slugging percentage (assisted by 28 doubles), resulting in a sterling .946 OPS. His stats project to 24 homers, 114 RBI, 117 runs and seven stolen bases for a full season.

Adam Jones, OF, Baltimore
A highly touted prospect, Jones hit 24 homers and 27 doubles with 84 RBI, 75 runs and eight stolen bases with Seattle's Triple-A squad in 2007. After being traded to Baltimore, Jones struggled with his power last season, hitting only nine homers with 57 RBI. But he showed promise in other fantasy areas, with a .270 average and 10 stolen bases in 132 games with the Orioles. He's only 22 and has the tools to be a strong fantasy player. He showed rapid improvement last year when he batted .280 with three homers, 19 RBI and 19 runs in July, before missing nearly all of August with a foot injury.

Top 10 reasons to play fantasy baseball

10 You can claim the 1,000 hours spent on your fantasy team during the year as a tax deduction for your new "startup business."

9 Tampa Bay Rays fans actually have a chance of winning a baseball league. Oh wait ...

8 Where else can you trade a Coco Crisp for E. Longoria?

7 You actually look forward to the daily morning dump of stats.

6 You are allowed to talk smack to another human for drafting your desired player right before your pick ... and not worry about him "kicking your a**!"

5 Who knew doing simple math could be a fantasy?

4 Finishing first in this race doesn't require actual running.

3 It teaches sound principles of good sportsmanship, honesty and altruism that will come to fruition later in life. Never mind, that's pretend baseball.

2 It gives you the chance to tell your boss it's scientifically proven that hours of mindless gazing on the computer can do wonders for improving productivity.

And the No. 1 answer in this time of recession ...

1 It's free, stupid! Just go to foxsports.com to sign up to play.

Albert Pujols Doug Pensinger/Getty

David Murphy, OF, Texas
Once a first-round pick by Boston in 2003, he showed the potential to hit for power and average as a rookie last season. Murphy hit 15 homers with 74 RBI, 64 runs, seven stolen bases and a .275 average in 108 games before being sidelined in early August with a knee injury. His stats project to 23 homers, 111 RBI, 96 runs and 11 stolen bases over a full season.

Denard Span, OF, Minnesota
A first-round pick for Minnesota in 2002, Span made his major-league debut at age 24 last season.After his second call-up in late June, Span played right field and became Minnesota's leadoff hitter. He showed excellent speed in the minors, stealing 23 bases at Double-A in 2006 and 25 at Triple-A in 2007. He continued his stealing prowess in the majors, swiping 18 bases to complement his .294 average and 70 runs in 93 games. Projected over a full season, Span's stats translate to 31 steals, 122 runs, 82 RBI and 10 homers. Of note, only 16 players stole 30 or more bases last season, and just one of those had at least 10 homers and 80 RBI (Grady Sizemore). His teammate Carlos Gomez, also a rookie, led the Twins with 33 steals.

Top 50 *Fantasy Players*

Rk	*Player*	*Pos*	*Tm*
1	A. Pujols	1B	STL
2	H. Ramirez	SS	FLA
3	A. Rodriguez	3B	NYY
4	D. Wright	3B	NYM
5	C. Beltran	OF	NYM
6	M. Cabrera	1B	DET
7	R. Braun	OF	MIL
8	J. Reyes	SS	NYM
9	L. Berkman	1B	HOU
10	R. Howard	1B	PHI
11	J. Santana	SP	NYM
12	M. Teixeira	1B	FA
13	J. Hamilton	OF	TEX
14	M. Holliday	OF	OAK
15	A. Soriano	OF	CHC
16	M. Ramirez	OF	FA
17	T. Lincecum	SP	SF
18	C. Sabathia	SP	FA
19	R. Halladay	SP	TOR
20	E. Longoria	3B	TB
21	C. Quentin	OF	CHW
22	G. Sizemore	OF	CLE
23	C. Lee	OF	HOU
24	J. Bay	OF	BOS
25	Ichiro	OF	SEA
26	C. Hamels	SP	PHI
27	J. Beckett	SP	BOS
28	J. Shields	SP	TB
29	D. Pedroia	2B	BOS
30	I. Kinsler	2B	TEX
31	A. Ramirez	3B	CHC
32	D. Haren	SP	ARI
33	B. Webb	SP	ARI
34	J. Mauer	C	MIN
35	C. Utley	2B	PHI
36	J. Rollins	SS	PHI
37	J. Morneau	1B	MIN
38	A. Gonzalez	1B	SD
39	D. Ortiz	DH	BOS
40	B. McCann	C	ATL
41	G. Soto	C	CHC
42	B. Roberts	2B	BAL
43	M. Ordonez	OF	DET
44	D. Lee	1B	CHC
45	V. Guerrero	OF	LAA
46	C. Lee	SP	CLE
47	J. Peavy	SP	SD
48	D. Matsuzaka	SP	BOS
49	K. Youkilis	1B	BOS
50	C. Jones	3B	ATL

On the rebound ...

Who will be next year's Carlos Delgado, delivering a great rebound performance? Largely due to assorted ailments, the following players disappointed with lackluster production in 2008. Given the off-season chance to heal their injuries, watch these talented players provide excellent value in fantasy drafts by producing seasons comparable to their 2007 numbers.

Victor Martinez, C, Cleveland
After injuring his hamstring in the season opener, Martinez was limited to 73 games and spent nearly three months on the disabled list. He hit just two homers with 35 RBI and a .278 average, a sharp decline from his 2007 stats of 25 homers, 114 RBI, 78 runs and a .301 average. Martinez remains eligible at catcher after playing 55 games behind the plate; a return to health should help this talented hitter regain his spot as one of fantasy's top catchers.

Rafael Furcal, SS, Free agent
Furcal compiled one of his best fantasy seasons in 2006 when he hit .300, scored 113 runs, stole 37 bases, hit 15 homers and had 63 RBI in his first season with the Dodgers. In 2007, Furcal was only one of four shortstops to score at least 80 runs and steal 25 bases (Jose Reyes, Hanley Ramirez, Ryan Theriot were the others.) However, a back injury limited Furcal to only 36 games last year. If he manages to stay healthy next season, look for Furcal to produce solid stats at the weak fantasy position of shortstop.

Khalil Greene, SS, St. Louis
A change of scenery to St. Louis may help Greene reclaim the strong stats of his 2007 season. Despite playing in one of the league's premier pitcher parks in San Diego, Greene hit 27 homers with 97 RBI and 89 runs in 2007. However, he slumped last season, and his year ended early with a hand injury in late July. Moving to a more hitter-friendly park and playing in a better lineup should increase his chances of a rebound.

Troy Tulowitzki, SS, Colorado
Drafted in the first round by Colorado in 2005, Tulowitzki made his major-league debut just a year later and became Colorado's full-time shortstop in 2007 at only age 22. He batted .291 with 24 homers, 99 RBI, 104 runs and seven stolen bases. He struggled last season, though, while battling quad and hand injuries. His superb talent and first season of excellent productivity indicate he'll rebound.

Ryan Zimmerman, 3B, Washington
Expectations were high for Zimmerman in 2008 after he hit 20 homers for the second straight season and totaled 201 RBI in 2006 and 2007. But he suffered a shoulder injury last year and spent nearly a month on the disabled list. When he returned, he hit just one homer in his first 30 games, but he managed to regain his home run stroke with six homers in the final 26 contests. That would project to 37 homers over a full 162-game season.

Eric Byrnes, OF, Arizona
He had his most successful fantasy season in 2007 when he hit 21 homers with 83 RBI, 103 runs, 50 stolen bases and a .286 average. However, he battled hamstring injuries last season and was limited to just 52 games before his season ended June 30. He's expected to be Arizona's left fielder on Opening Day, though trade rumors are swirling around him. Regardless of which team he plays for next season, he still can mount a comeback at age 32.

Going Steady

Drafting top prospects may backfire, as highly touted first-year players can be boom-or-bust risks. Instead, opt for players with proven productivity and health over a long period of time, and you may be rewarded with solid stats at season's end.

Jason Giambi, 1B/DH, Free agent
While he underperformed relative to his huge contract with the Yankees, Giambi has consistently produced strong power stats. He's hit at least 20 homers in 11 of the past 13 seasons and smacked at least 32 home runs in eight of his last 10 years. He's also had at least 100 RBI in seven of his past 11 years and 87 RBI nine times during that span. In 2008, he hit 32 homers with 96 RBI ... numbers right in line with Giambi's past decade.

Mark DeRosa, 2B/3B/OF, Chicago Cubs
He's eligible to play at second base (95 games), third base (22 games) and outfield (65 games). Owners can wait until the final rounds to draft a second baseman who can be counted on to be healthy and produce adequate stats. DeRosa has delivered at least 10 homers, 72 RBI, 64 runs and a .285 average in each of the past three seasons. He had his best fantasy season last year when he hit 21 homers, drove in 87 RBI, scored 103 runs, stole six bases and batted .285. He's also played in at least 136 games during the past three seasons.

Troy Glaus, 3B, St. Louis
Though he may no longer be one of fantasy's top third basemen, Glaus has been a model of consistent production. He's homered at least 16 times in each of the last 10 seasons, and has reached 27 homers seven of those years, including last year. He's also had at least 97 RBI in six of the last nine seasons, including 2008. In addition, Glaus posted his highest batting average (.270) last season since 2000. Few can match his consistency in the home run department, as he's slammed 303 homers in the last 10 years.

Melvin Mora, 3B, Baltimore
Better fantasy third basemen exist, but Mora has consistently produced and stayed healthy, providing value as a late-round fantasy draft pick for the 1B/3B slot. He's played in at least 126 games in each of the past five seasons, and eight of the last nine years. He's batted no lower than .274 in the last six years, and has reached at least 77 runs and 83 RBI in four of the last five seasons. In addition, Mora has hit at least 23 homers in three of the last five years.

Brian Giles, OF, San Diego
Owners looking for a fifth outfielder to boost their average can look at Giles and his career .294 mark in 14 seasons. Those with lineups consisting of power-heavy, low-average players like Ryan Howard, Adam Dunn, Pat Burrell, Jim Thome, Carlos Pena and Giambi can especially target Giles. Giles batted .304 with 12 homers, 63 RBI and 72 runs in 2008. Just as impressive, Giles has been extremely durable, playing in at least 130 games in 10 of the last 12 seasons, and 141 games in eight of the last 10 years.

Raul Ibanez, OF, Free agent
Adhering to a strict year-round workout regimen, Ibanez has consistently produced solid fantasy stats in the last seven seasons. During that span, he's reached 20 homers five times, 100 RBI four times, 89 RBI six times, a .289 average six times and 80 runs five times. He's also averaged 22 homers, 97 RBI, 85 runs and a .292 mark for those past seven seasons.

Melvin Mora Jonathan Daniel/Getty

Felipe Lopez Jonathan Daniel/Getty

Just maybe ...

Sometimes a player just needs a second chance (or third and fourth) to show he's capable of repeating a career year.

Felipe Lopez, 2B, Free agent
He's expected to sign with St. Louis to be the everyday second baseman. He had a trial run when he joined St. Louis in early August, playing 43 games for the Cardinals, with 23 at second base. Despite batting just .234 for Washington in 100 games to start the season, Lopez reversed his fortunes and hit .385 with St. Louis. He also had four home runs and stole four bases. Of note, he owns career highs of 23 homers and 44 stolen bases. Lopez scored 30 runs while occasionally batting in the second spot ahead of Albert Pujols. Extrapolated over a full 162-game season, his season totals project to 15 homers, 15 steals and 113 runs. Anything approaching those stats will be appealing at such a weak fantasy position. Only five second baseman scored 100 runs last season (Dustin Pedroia, Chase Utley, Brian Roberts, DeRosa and Ian Kinsler). ■

Coming in February...

2009 Fox Fantasy Baseball Guide

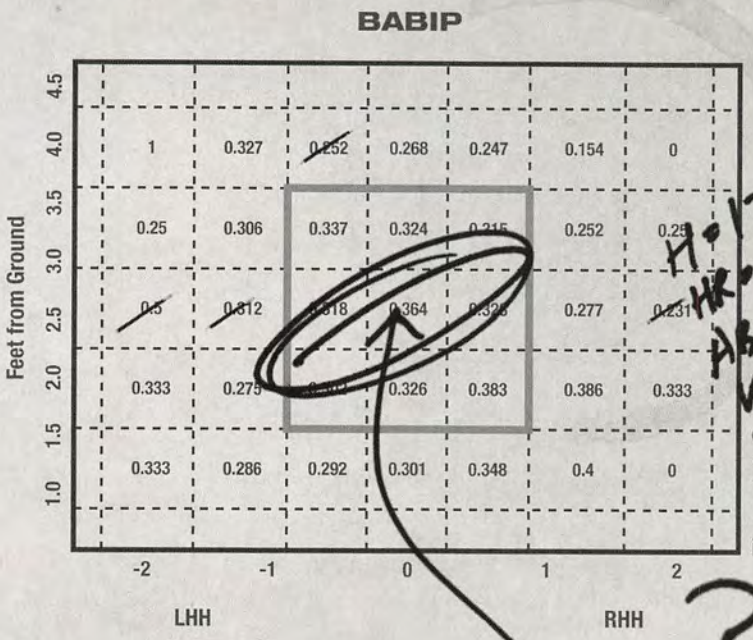

Figure A.1

A.5 BABIP (Batting Average on Balls in Play):

A player's batting average on the balls he puts into play, which excludes strikeouts and HRs that leave the p

$$BABIP = \frac{H\text{-}HR}{AB\text{-}K\text{-}HR+SF}$$

BABIP can be considered to have a direct relationship to Defensive Efficiency Record or DER.

DER is the number of outs made by fielders per ball in play (excluding home runs).

So, DER plus BABIP could equal 1, depending on the definition being

Figure A.1 gives a visual representation of this r

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SOFTBALL *BY KIRK McNAIR*

An Abundance Of Talent

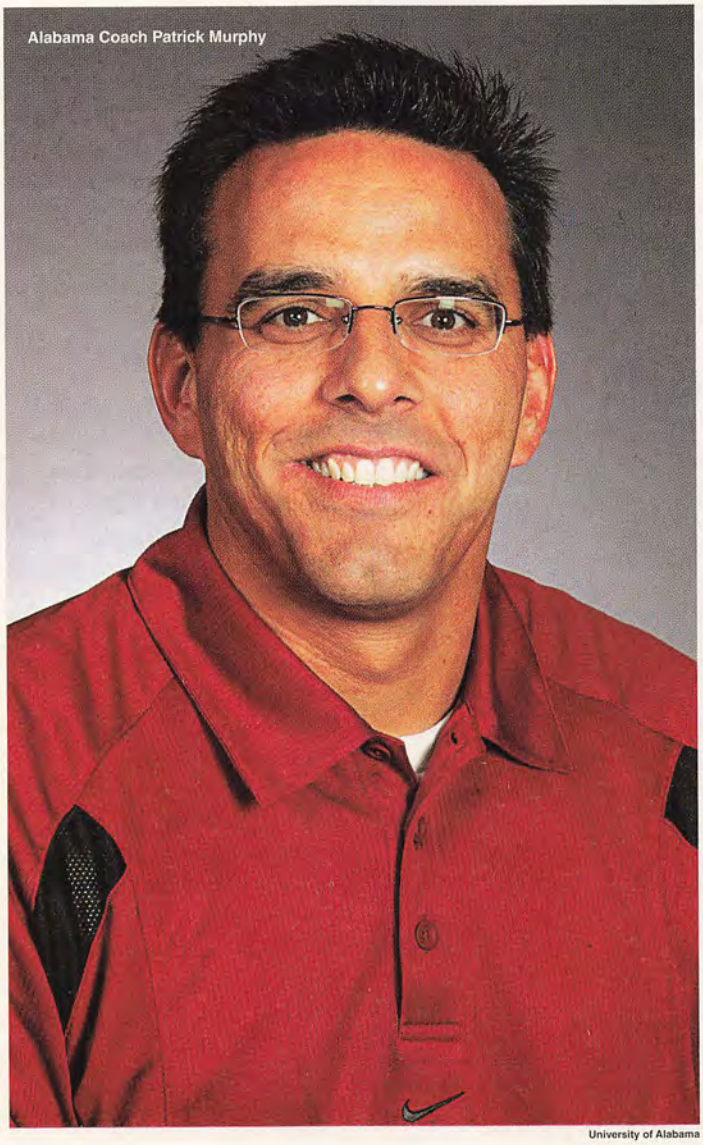
Crimson Tide will be among nation's best

Alabama Softball Coach Patrick Murphy has his work cut out for him, but he's got to be pleased with the problem He's going to have a hard time filling out a lineup card. That is not because he doesn't have enough worthy candidates; rather because he has so many. Good players will be cooling their spikes.

Alabama has become one of the nation's softball powers in a relatively short period. Bama's program was begun in 1997 and last year the Crimson Tide finished fourth in the nation with a 58-8 record. Alabama made its 10th straight NCAA Tournament appearance and finished its season in the College World Series for the fifth time.

This year Alabama is expected to reach the World Series again and the Crimson Tide is among a handful of teams expected to challenge for the national championship.

Patrick Murphy has been Bama's coach in 11 of the Crimson Tide's 13 seasons and he is one of the nation's best. His 11-year record is 525-157, an 85.8 winning percentage.



Alabama Coach Patrick Murphy

University of Alabama

And he has been able to keep his two primary assistants, Alyson Habetz, who has been with him all 11 years, and Vann Stuedeman, starting her ninth year.

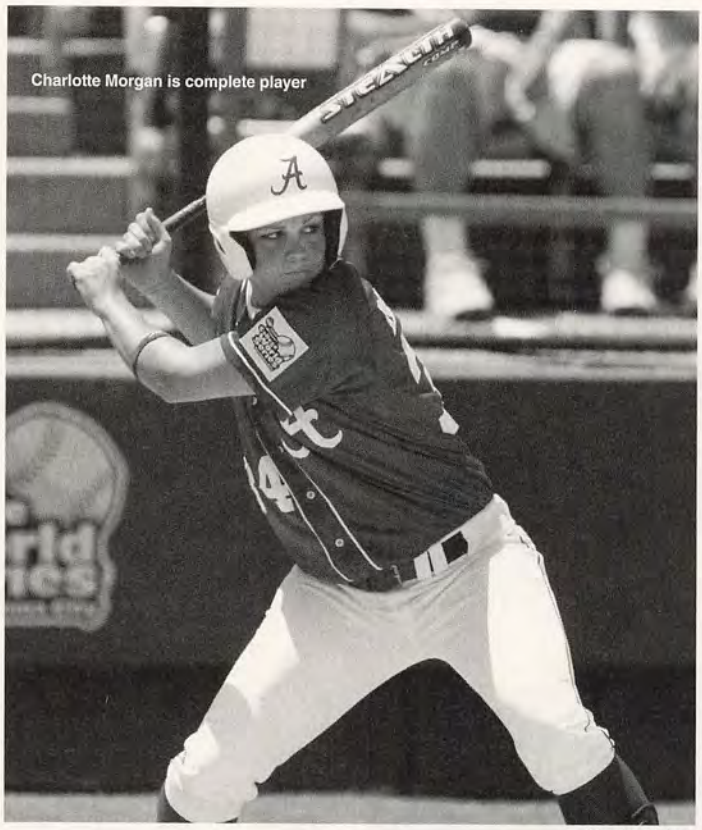
Alabama lost some good players from last year's team that finished 25-3 and was second in the Southeastern Conference. Jordan Praytor, Dani Woods and Katie Johnson were regulars in the 2008 lineup, and Chrissy Owens had an outstanding pitching career.

That's looking back. The view ahead is magnificent.

"We're going to have older position players and younger pitchers this year," Murphy said. "Next year it will be the opposite. What you don't want is young pitchers and young position players. The young pitchers seem to be able to handle it pretty well."

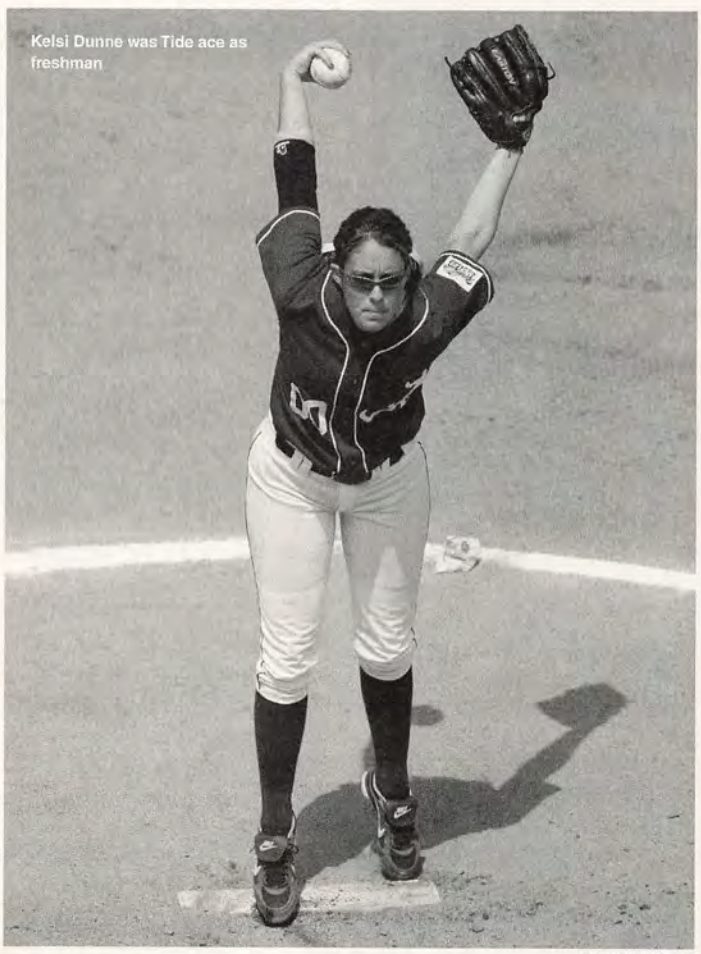
It does begin with pitching. "They call it fast pitch for a reason," Murphy said of the sport. "They don't call it fast hit or fast run."

Bama returns two outstanding performers from last year and adds a redshirt freshman with great potential.



Charlotte Morgan is complete player

University of Alabama



Kelsi Dunne was Tide ace as freshman

University of Alabama

Last year both Charlotte Morgan, a junior this year, and sophomore Kelsi Dunne took over as the top pitchers when Owens (who was 13-0 on the mound) developed arm problems.

"Charlotte Morgan turned out to be really good," Murphy said. Morgan is also a top hitter, batting .417 with team highs of 19 home runs, 19 doubles, 80 runs batted in and .813 slugging percentage. On the mound she was 18-2 with a 1.24 earned run average, 73 strikeouts and only 17 walks.

Dunne turned out to be the ace of the staff last year as a freshman. She was 26-6 with a 1.46 ERA and had 274 strikeouts in 212 innings pitched. She walked only 72. Opponents had a batting average of only .156 against her, one reason that Bama had an advantage of .324 to .184 in batting average last year.

Murphy said the two are different, that Dunne throws it up (screwball and rise), and Morgan throws it down, low in and low out. Opponents have to prepare for both.

"If you have two pitchers, you're stronger down the stretch," Murphy said. "That means they're fresh, 100 per cent ready when it counts. We try to have a staff, not just a one-horse ride."

Both Morgan and Dunne had summer surgeries, Dunn minor elbow surgery and Morgan repair of a stress fracture in her foot.

The third pitcher will be redshirt freshman Amanda Locke, who will also be one of Bama's top power hitters. She pitched all six games in Alabama's fall tournament schedule. She won all six games, had four shutouts and provided only one base on balls.

She did a great job with her opportunity," Murphy said. "All three will pitch."

Morgan, who also plays first base, and Dunne are two of four returning All-America players.

When Morgan is pitching, any of a handful might be at first base. "We'll probably have about five fighting for that job," Murphy said. He signed two freshmen who could catch or play first base. They are Olivia Gibson and Kendall Dawson. "Both are going to be good," the coach said.

There is one other returning All-America player and two other returning starters in the infield.

Kelley Montalvo, a senior third baseman, batted .373 last year and was second to Morgan in slugging percentage at .663. She had an outstanding .983 fielding percentage at the hot corner. She led Bama in assists with 112. She hit .419 in SEC games. "She's very consistent offensively, but she has room to get better," Murphy said.

Senior Kellie Eubanks returns at shortstop. She batted .256 and had a fine .931 fielding percentage.

Senior Lauren Parker, who transferred to Bama from Baylor after the 2006 season, was an All-America as a sophomore and is back at second base. She had been a so-so hitter at Baylor, a .266 average in 2006. In her first year at Alabama she exploded with a .457 average. Last year she was injured and still batted .310 and had a .984 fielding percentage. Her slugging percentage of .612 trailed only Morgan and Montalvo.

Alabama returns senior catcher Ashley Holcombe, who was All-SEC Defense last year. Holcombe wasn't challenged much. Of the 27 baserunners who tried to take a base on her, 20 were sent trotting to the dugout, thrown out by

Holcombe. She had only one passed ball all season. Last year she batted .294. And she stole as many bases as she allowed, stealing successfully seven times in just 10 attempts.

Last year Alabama stole 163 bases in 186 attempts. Opponents had 21 stolen bases in 28 attempts.

One reason Alabama was so successful in stealing bases was Brittany Rogers, an All-America and one of the fastest players ever. The senior centerfielder was an All-America last year. Because of her academic schedule in the fall, Murphy said, "We didn't get to see much of her. But it was fun to watch her flourish last year. She's one of the greatest athletes we've had."

Rogers worked hard all summer, Murphy said, telling Bama's strength coaches that she wanted to improve her speed. Rogers wowed observers last year by doing things like turning a seemingly routine ground ball single up the middle into a standup double.

She attempted 66 stolen bases and was successful 60 times.

Although a natural right-handed hitter, she usually bats left-handed to get the quick jump to first base. Last year she batted .452 with 98 hits in 217 at-bats. In seven right-handed at-bats she delivered five hits.

Murphy is very high on the other outfielder candidates.

Sophomore Whitney Larsen was a regular last year, but mostly at second base when Parker was injured. She batted .270. "She could play any of the nine positions on the field," Murphy said.

Three freshmen have caught his eye as potential outfielders.

Jennifer Fenton is a "pure lefty who is a true triple threat," Murphy said.

Kelley Montalvo can be even better

University of Alabama

Jazlyn Lunceford had a good fall. Murphy said she is fast and plays good defense and has a good arm.

Cassandra Reilly-Boccia is a left-hander with good power who Murphy said was one of the best hitters in the East in last year's recruiting class.

One thing Murphy doesn't have to worry about when NCAA Tournament selection time comes is the Crimson Tide's strength of schedule. He is taking on most of the nation's top teams in regular season play. Softball teams can play only 56 games this year, and the Tide's SEC schedule will take up many of those dates. In addition to Alabama and defending SEC champion Florida, Murphy expects Georgia, Tennessee and LSU to be strong. Last year nine of 11 SEC teams received NCAA Tournament bids.

He expects Alabama and Florida to join UCLA, Washington and Texas A&M as the nation's top teams. Bama is in tournaments with Washington (in Tuscaloosa) and UCLA and will play a number of teams who were in last year's NCAA Tournament.

"I think when you have a good team you should play this type schedule," Murphy said.

He said that Alabama can look back on a lot of great players. But, he said, the skills of the past pale in comparison to his current players in terms of defense, running and hitting.

"This is going to be a fun team to watch," Murphy said. "If they were guys, there would be a lot of major league prospects. It doesn't happen very often that you get a team like this."

So it's easy to see why filling out the lineup card is so difficult. Oh, and Bama softball has another tough problem, too. Not enough seats. The Crimson Tide sells out before the first pitch is thrown on February 7. But The University is rectifying that problem with some fan-friendly areas surrounding the complex. ■

Lauren Parker is All-America player

University of Alabama

2009 Alabama Softball Roster

No.	Name	Pos.	Hgt.	Class	Hometown (School)
00	Kelsi Dunne	P	6-0	Soph	Port Orange, Fla. (Spruce Creek)
2	Jazlyn Lunceford	OF	5-6	Frosh	Northport (Tuscaloosa County)
5	Jessica Smith	UT	5-5	Junior	Pell City
6	Ashley Holcombe	C	5-6	Senior	Fayetteville, Ga. (Fayette County)
7	Jennifer Fenton	OF	5-4	Frosh	Kennesaw, Ga. (Kennesaw Mountain)
8	Brittany Rogers	OF	5-6	Senior	Dacula, Ga.
10	Kelley Montalvo	UT	5-0	Senior	Miami (Pace)
12	Kendall Dawson	C	5-9	Frosh	Plant City, Fla.
13	Alex Blewitt	Inf	5-11	Junior	Archibald, Pa. (Valley View)
15	Catherine Dozier	Inf	5-8	Soph	Vestavia Hills
16	Kellie Eubanks	Inf	6-0	Senior	Prairieville, La. (St. Amant)
17	Lauren Parker	Inf	5-4	Senior	Port Neches, Texas (Baylor)
18	Cassandra Reilly-Boccia	OF/1B	5-6	Frosh	Yorktown Heights, N.Y. (Yorktown)
20	Whitney Larsen	UT	5-9	Soph	Vestavia Hills
22	Amanda Locke	P	5-11	RS Frosh	Mewquite, Texas (North Mexquite)
24	Olivia Gibson	C	5-9	Frosh	Tuscaloosa (Tuscaloosa Academy)
34	Charlotte Morgan	P/UT	5-10	Junior	Moreno Valley, Calif. (Valley View)

HEAD COACH: Patrick Murphy

ASSOCIATE HEAD COACH: Alyson Habetz

ASSISTANT COACH: Vann Stuedeman

BASKETBALL *BY CARY L. CLARK*

High Flyer

Senario Hillman aims to help Tide soar

You can call him Senario, his given name, which is pronounced "She-nair-rio." You can call him "Rell," his nickname short for his middle name, Jerrell. You can call him a posterizer, as evidenced by the dunk he hammered over an unsuspecting Lucas Hargrove of Auburn last year. You can even call him the human-highlight reel, which they used to call Georgia and Atlanta Hawks star Dominique Wilkins, who wore the same number Hillman now has, 21.

No matter what you call him, Senario Hillman is his own man. A man with a 41-inch vertical jump.

"I used to wear no. 23, because I liked Michael Jordan," said the sophomore Alabama wing guard. "In middle school, I changed to 21, because I wanted to be my own person."

The same logic applied when Hillman and his mom sat down to choose which four-year school he would sign with after leading Irwinton, Georgia's Wilkinson County High School to the 2007 Class A state title. Despite serious overtures from both Georgia and Georgia Tech, Hillman was determined to leave the state–and become his own man.

"I had to choose between Florida State, LSU or Alabama," Hillman said. "We took all our visits, and I just sat down with my mother. I like this school (Alabama) better than the rest of them. I liked the organization and how Coach Gottfried gets his players to get their education and graduate. My mom stays on me about my schoolwork, so I chose Alabama.

Junior guard Senario Hillman

University of Alabama

"If I would have stayed at home (and played in Athens or Atlanta), it would have been too easy for me to just go home if I was in a slump or something," Hillman said. "I didn't want to be tempted by that."

"He's one of those guys that he's so quick, and he's so athletic, that he just creates plays, on both ends of the floor," said Alabama Coach Mark Gottfried. "There are times, where he's guarding the ball, and you put the ball in front of him, and you don't have it protected real well, he's going to pop that thing loose.

"Offensively, he's just aggressive. He's just active. He's attacking the basket. He takes threes, but he goes to the rim. That's where he's an effective player."

Everyone knows Hillman can dunk (especially Auburn's Hargrove), but he is determined to broaden his offensive game and make opponents come out and guard him.

"Last year, I know my weakness was my jump shot. Everybody played off me so I could shoot, because they knew I was having trouble shooting. This past summer, I really worked at it, with Ron Steele. He helped me a lot, He stayed on me to work on my jump shot. I stayed all summer and did that, and its coming along, now."

On many summer nights, Hillman came into Coleman Coliseum along and used a robotic passer to help him work on his shot. "I got on the machine gun a lot of nights," he said, talking about a device that can be loaded with several basketballs. The device will pass the ball to a spotted up shooter, who can then fire away three or so times before chasing down the balls, re-loading the "gun" and starting over.

Though Hillman started the 2008-2009 season shooting the three-ball at a 26 per cent clip, that's still better than the 15 per cent he shot as a true freshman when the three-point line was a foot shorter. "Everybody makes threes in practice, and I don't what it is when we get in games," he said. "I'm just going to keep working on it, and just keep trying to improve it," he said. "I feel better about it this year, because last year it was terrible. I know it will come along, and be there."

Several national commentators feel Hillman should stick to driving and slashing. Both Bill Raftery and Jimmy Dykes of ESPN said as much while calling Bama's games in the EA Sports Invitational played in Maui.

"I don't think he's a great deep shooter," Raftery said during a Tide game on the islands. "If he's knocking threes down, that's a big bonus."

Said Dykes: "He does have some hops. If he can make that (three-point) shot consistently, okay. I just don't know, yet. He's going to take some bad shots, but he's going to make two or three bad shots per game."

Dykes advises Hillman to eschew the jumper and take his man

to the hole each time down. "Hillman can go low. He ducks that shoulder lower than the on-ball defender, and it's over."

"I don't listen to what those guys say," Hillman smiled. "I just do what I can do. If the shot's there, I take it."

Those who see Hillman more regularly don't mind if he drives and dunks, or pulls up and pops.

"Senario had a really good off-season," Gottfried said. "Here's what you have with him: he's a human highlight film. He's an athletic guy, who is just phenomenal. I've told people that he's a 6-foot-1 Gerald Wallace. He plays like that. Now what happened last year is a lot of understanding the defensive things you're doing and how to defend certain things and what's a good shot and what's not a good shot—all those things as a freshman for him, he was kind of going through. I think now that he's got all that behind him and he's got a year under his belt, he feels much more confident right now because, 'I've got a foundation now, and now I've got that plus now I've got my athleticism and I'm going to go out there and play with reckless abandon.' He's done a good job. I'm excited for him this year. I think he's going to have a terrific year."

Athletic Senario Hillman counted on for offense and defense

University of Alabama

"Senario's getting more and more confident in that outside shot as time goes along," said Chris Stewart, Alabama's basketball play-by-play announcer.

A man whose jumper earned respect at The Capstone in the mid 1990's agrees. Brian Passink, who sits along side Stewart while handling color commentary on the network, can tell Hillman is a better shooter this season even if early stats barely show it.

"He's making progress on his outside shot," Passink said. "He's a great perimeter defender, too. Last year, Senario was a role player, but this year Coach Gottfried is calling on him to get it done on both ends of the floor."

Hillman says he now has a green light from Gottfried to fire when ready if he's open behind the arc. "It's a good shot, if you're wide open, and he doesn't mind if you shoot it."

Anyone who has played basketball on any level, from the SEC to men's church league, will tell you that knowing you're going to be in the game and not worrying about being pulled by the coach affects your play. Hillman is no different. This year, he's a starter. Last year, as a reserve, he knew he was a missed shot or two from re-joining Gottfried on the row of folding chairs that make up the Alabama bench at Coleman Coliseum.

"It affected my game," Hillman admits. "Worrying if I'm about to come out. I might not go hard then, because I'm thinking about getting pulled out of the game if I mess up. I try not to let that affect me."

Hillman played in all but one of Bama's games last year, and averaged 4.3 points and a tad less than 15 minutes per contest. This year, as a starter, he averaged nearly 12 points through six games, and 24.3 minutes. It matters.

One thing that's helped Hillman's game, and will aid his outside shot, is the return of star point guard Ronald Steele. Steele can penetrate and dish out to a wide-open Hillman, who can then choose to stroke a three or drive to the basket.

"Its pretty fun playing with Ron," Hillman said. "He knows the game. He's been playing here for a long time (five years). I'm happy to be with him on the court. I had never seen him play (since Steele sat out last season as a medical red shirt). When I was in high school, people told me he was real good. I see it, now."

Defense is a source of pride for Hillman, who Gottfried challenged pre-season to become America's best on-ball defender. "He's got the tools, and I've challenged him to do that," Gottfried said.

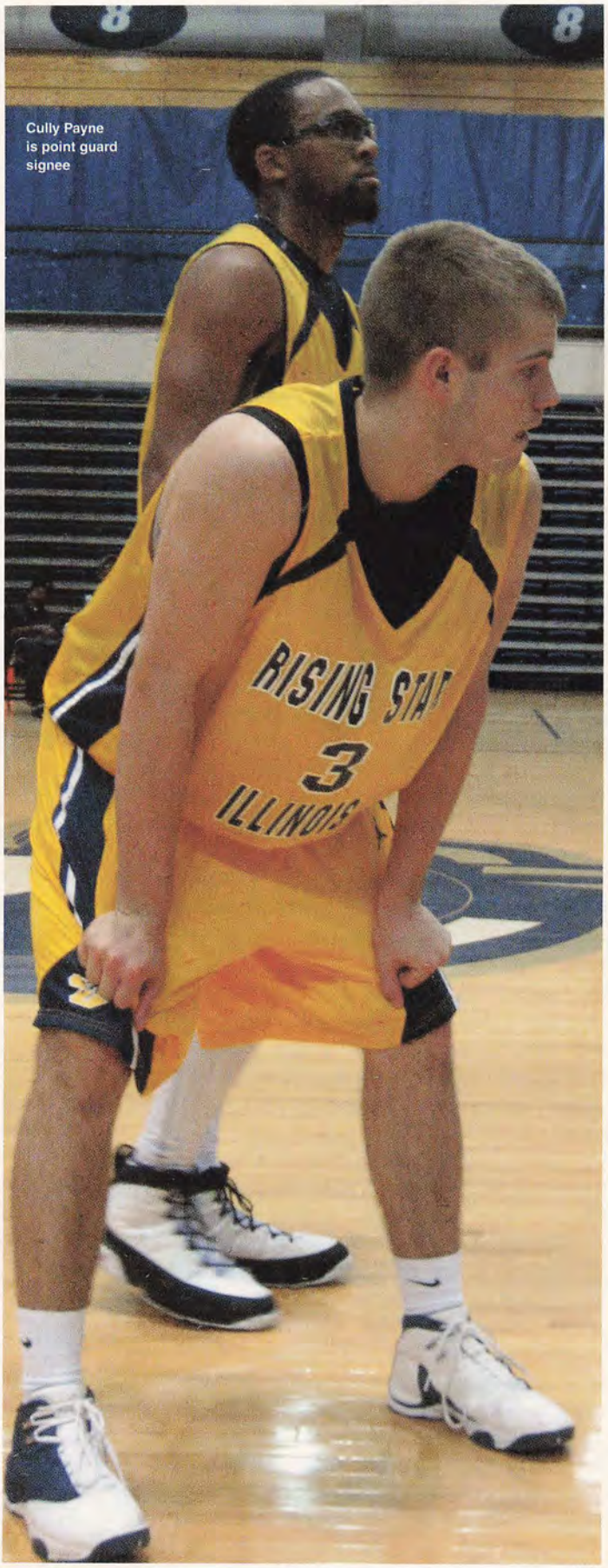
Hillman has accepted. "(Gottfried) wants me to be the best defender in the nation," the sophomore said. "I said, 'Yeah, I agree with that.' I'm just going to run with the challenge, and just do what I can to try to stop the best player on the floor that we're playing against. I like that he challenged me with that. I like holding defense."

Alabama struggled through a 17-16 season last year, and this year's Tide had a sluggish start, losing at home to Mercer and barely beating a lowly Alabama A&M team by eight points.

"We get along great as a team off the court," Hillman observed. "Sometimes, on the court, we just don't gel. We need somebody to step up and say, 'Let's go!' sometimes. The coaches do that, and Ron (Steele) does it, but we need everybody to do it.

"Basketball is a lot fun. I just come out, and work hard," said Hillman. "I talk to Mike (freshman forward JaMychal Green). I just tell him, 'Keep playing hard. You're game will come along, if you just keep playing hard and stay focused.'"

Give credit to Senario Hillman for trying to be a complete player, trying his best to help push the Tide to new heights—flying high to the rims, locking down opponents, or knocking down the jump shots. ■



Cully Payne is point guard signee

Scout

RECRUITING *BY KIRK McNAIR*

Early Signees

Winter and spring sports add performers

It's no secret that Alabama fans have most of their recruiting attention on football Signing Day, the first Wednesday in February. But there is an important recruiting period in the middle of November when winter and spring sports add performers for the following year.

Unlike football, in which almost every prospect and his destination is well known in advance and in which the scholarship papers are FAXed in and released to the media almost immediately, the November signing period for winter and spring sports lasts about a week. And in many sports the paperwork seems to dribble in, so that sometimes all signees are not revealed for weeks. Alabama has announced signees in a number of men's and women's winter and spring sports, but it is likely that more will be announced later. Meanwhile, here are those who have inked with various Bama sports:

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Alabama Coach Mark added a smorgasbord for men's basketball. He had some old, some new, some faraway, some from high school, some junior college. It was also something like a Chinese restaurant menu as Gottfried picked one to cover every position with his five new players.

The new Alabama men's basketball players, all of whom had been expected, are:

Cully Payne, a 6-0 point guard from Schaumburg, Illinois; Charvez Davis, a 6-3 wing guard from Montgomery Jeff Davis by way of Okaloosa-Walton Community College in Niceville, Florida; 6-8 forward Chris Hines of Evergreen Hillcrest, by way of Southwestern Illinois in Belleville; forward Tony Mitchell, 6-6, of Swainsboro, Georgia, who is playing this year at Central Park Christian in Birmingham; and Shawn Kemp, Jr., of Cherokee High in Canton, Georgia, a 6-9 center who is the son of the former NBA star.

Mitchell signed with Alabama last year but just missed being academically eligible. He was re-signed for the 2009-10 season. Gottfried said, "We felt like it'd be good if we could just basically sign a player at every spot. I'm excited about the group as a whole."

There had been some speculation that Alabama might add 6-1 guard Eric Bledsoe of Birmingham, who was also said to be considering Auburn, Ole Miss and Alabama-Birmingham, but who was also reported as likely headed to junior college.

Dave Telep, Scout Media's basketball recruiting expert, said, "Bringing Tony Mitchell back into the fold was key; he's a guy who knows his way around the court and can score. Kemp is a big body who gives you defense first and Payne deepens the rotation at the point. Mix in two jucos and there's class balance in the group. In my opinion, the defining player in the mix is Mitchell. He sets the tone for the class."

BASEBALL

Alabama's Jim Wells and his college baseball coaching fraternity have a difficult job. College basketball recruiting must be good enough to win, but the players can't be so good that they end up foregoing the college game for a professional opportunity. Since colleges have to divide up a few scholarships within limited parameters, the job of recruiting becomes even more difficult. And this is in a sport where some schools in states where gambling money goes for scholarships have a huge advantage over non-gambling states. (Alabama is one of those states with no legal gambling.)

Wells added 11 new players in the November signing period. Now he'll have to wait to see if they enroll for the Fall, 2009 semester, when baseball recruiting is finally over. His group includes nine from high school and two from junior college.

The high school list, which features four from the state of Alabama includes: Brett Booth, Danny Collins, Kevin Gifford, Tucker Hawley, Andrew Miller, Trey Pilkington, Matt Taylor, Adam Windsor and Taylor Wolfe. The two junior college transfers are Jason Townsend and Brett Whitaker.

All nine high school players are rated in the Top 500 by Perfect Game Crosschecker, which is the national rating system for prep all-stars.

"We have added a quality recruiting class, with some outstanding and talented players," Wells said. "(Assistant Coaches) Mitch (Gaspard) and Dax (Norris) worked really hard and did an outstanding job in signing this group". Booth, Miller and Pilkington played at the 2008 East Coast Professional Showcase in Lakeland, Florida. Hawley, Gifford and Taylor played in the summer league, The Chain, last summer in Georgia.

Here is a look at the baseball signees:

Booth (C, 5-10, 190) is a standout football and baseball player at Tuscaloosa County High School. A two-year starter at catcher for Coach Chad Shannon, Booth was team MVP and Offensive Player of the Year in 2008. He was also named to the Alabama Sports Writers Association (ASWA) 2008 all-state team. A three-year starter at quarterback, Booth led the Wildcats to back-to-back undefeated regular seasons in 2007 and 2008

Collins (INF, 6-2, 180) has started the last two seasons at Niceville (Florida) High School. During his sophomore season (2007), he was a teammate of Alabama right-hander Jimmy Nelson. He was an all-county selection following his junior season when he batted .420 with five home runs and 27 RBI. He also had 40 runs scored and compiled a .504 on-base percentage and .630 slugging mark. Collins participated in the 2006 and 2007 National Underclass Showcase, as well as the 2007 Southeast Underclass Showcase. He was invited to play in the 2008 17-and-under Crosschecker National Championships and 2008 BCS Finals.

Gifford (INF/RHP, 5-9, 180) is a two-way star at Northside High School in Warner-Robbins, Georgia, where he plays for Coach Kevin Kinsler. Gifford batted .536 with four home runs, 27 walks and scored 43 runs as a prep junior. He was named to the Georgia Top 100 in 2007 and 2008. He is a three-time All-Houston County selection (2006, 2007 and 2008). Gifford has tons of showcase experience, participating in the Perfect Game Crosschecker 2007 16-and-under National Championship, 2007 National Underclass Championship, 2008 18-and-under National Championship and the 2008 WWBA World Championship. He played this summer for Chain Baseball, along with

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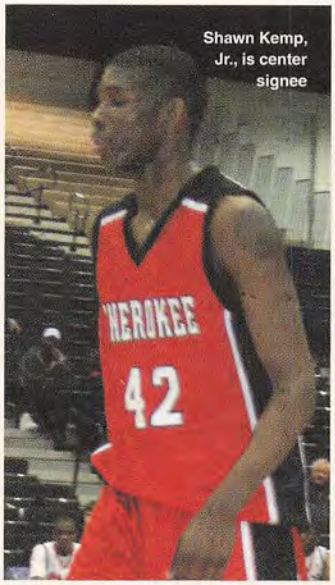

Shawn Kemp, Jr., is center signee

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Kevin Gifford

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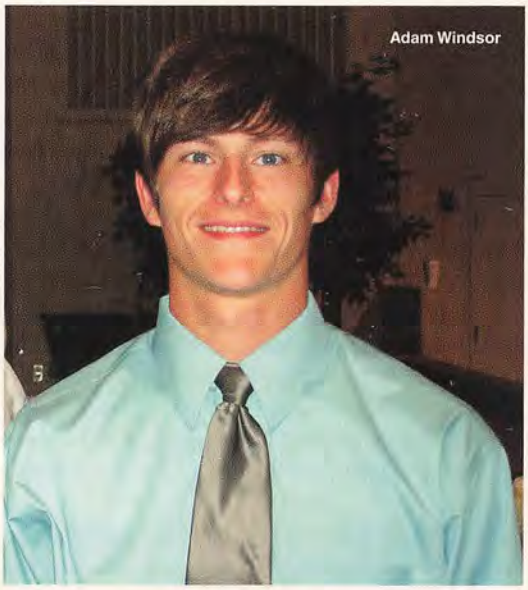
Adam Windsor

current signees Hawley and Taylor.

Hawley (RHP, 6-2, 210) is a senior at South Aiken (South Carolina) High School. He has attended numerous showcases, including 2008 WWBA World Championship, 2008 WWBA 18-and-under National Championship, 2007 WWBA World Championship, 2007 WWBA 17-and-under World Championship and 2006 WWBA 16-and-under World Championship. His father, Bill, was taken in the first-round (23rd overall pick) of the 1981 MLB Draft by the Cincinnati Reds.

Miller (OF, 6-1, 190) is a senior and two-sport star at St. Paul's High School in Mobile. He is a three-year starter and two-time ASWA honorable mention all-state performer for Coach Shane Sullivan. In his three-year career, Miller is batting .431 (113-for-262) with 20 extra base hits, 87 stolen bases and 94 runs scored. On the mound, he has 30 career wins. Miller has not missed a game in his prep career and has 99 games played entering his senior season. As a junior, he hit .430 (37-for-86) with 25 runs scored, two home runs and 25 RBI. He added 24 stole bases in 26 attempts. He was selected to play in the 2008 Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) North-South All-Star Game in Huntsville. Miler participated in the 2008 Perfect Game National Showcase and 2008 WWBA 17-and-under National Championships. A standout receiver on the St. Paul's football team, Miller was a member of the 2007 Class 5A state championship. He played on the same high school team as current UA football players Mark Barron and Ivan Matchett and 2008 UA signee, Destin Hood, who signed with the Washington Nationals, and current Tide football commitment quarterback A.J. McCarron.

Pilkington (RHP, 6-2, 205) is a right-hand pitcher from Oxford High School. He plays for Coach Wes Brooks. He was a 2008 All-Calhoun County selection and was named the 2008 Calhoun County All-Tournament Team. Pilkington posted a 6-3 record and 2.33 ERA for the Yellow Jackets as a junior with one shutout. He had 55 strikeouts in 57 innings on the mound. Pilkington was named to the 2008 Alabama North-South All-Star Game in Huntsville. He also attended the 2007 Southeast Underclass Showcase and 2008 WWBA 17-and-under Championships. He was also invited to the 2008 East Coast Professional Showcase. Pilkington played this past summer for the Excel Blue Wave.

Taylor (LHP, 6-0, 170) is one of two standout left-handers from Columbus (Georgia) High School to ink with the Tide during the early signing period. He also plays centerfield for Coach Bobby Howard. Taylor brings ton of showcase experience to The Capstone having participated in the 2008 WWBA World Championship, the 2008 WWBA 17-and-under National Championship, the 2007 WWBA 16-and under National Championship, the 2007 BCS 16-and-under finals, the 2006 Southside Atlanta State Showcase and the 2006 WWBA 15-and-under National Championship.

Townsend (RHP, 6-3, 190) is a sophomore at Chipola Junior College, where he plays for Jeff Johnson. He posted a 7-3 record and 4.57 ERA in 17 starts on the mound last season with two complete games. Prior to signing with Chipola, Townsend was a two-time all-state and three-time all-region pitcher at Sherwood Christian Academy in Albany, Georgia. He was the 2007 Region III Player of the Year.

Windsor (LHP, 5-9, 160) is a senior left-handed pitcher at Clay-Chalkville High School in Pinson, where he has compiled a 14-6 (.700) career record on the mound. He was 7-3 with a 2.10 ERA as a junior in 2008 with 80 strikeouts in 56 innings on the mound. He was 4-3 as a prep sophomore (2007) and 3-0 as a freshman (2006), which included a win over Baker High School in Class 5A state championship game. Windsor has participated in numerous baseball showcases including 2008 Triple Crown Tournament, 2008 Nashville Showcase, 2008 Perfect Game BCS Regional and 2008 WWBA World Series. Windsor played this past summer for the Excel Blue Wave.

Whitaker (RHP, 6-1, 190) is a sophomore at Shelton State Community College in Tuscaloosa, where he plays for Coach Bobby Sprowl. As a freshman, he helped the Bucs to a runner-up finish at the 2008 National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) World Series. He also helped Shelton State to its second straight Alabama Junior College State Championship and Region XXII title. Whitaker was 4-3 with four saves and a 5.01 ERA last season. He was fifth in the state with five saves. In 26 games, he worked 46 2/3 innings and allowed 44 hits, 31 runs and 26 earned runs with 26 walks and 23 strikeouts. Whitaker also batted .333 (63-of-189) with seven home runs and 43 RBI in 63 games. He had a season-high five RBIs in a win over Birmingham Southern on April 1, 2008.

Wolfe (LHP, 6-0, 177) is from Columbus (Georgia) High School playing for Coach Bobby Howard. He is one of two standout southpaws from Columbus High to sign with the Crimson Tide during the early signing period. He played this summer for the Homeplate Chilidogs. Wolfe participated in the 2008 17-and-under BCS Finals, the 2008 WWBA 17-and-under National Championship and the 2007 16-and-under BCS finals at the Perfect Game Showcase.

SOFTBALL

Alabama is a national powerhouse in softball and Coach Patrick Murphy recruited in order to keep it that way. He added six players for the Crimson Tide's 2010 squad.

Here is a look at the additions:

Jackey Branham comes to Bama from Buchanan High School in Troy, Missouri. The shortstop has garnered numerous accolades for her high school and club squads, including all-state and all-academic for Coach Lance Richardson at . For Coach Bob Furrer on her club team, St. Louis Chaos, Branham helped the Chaos to an ASA runner-up in 2008, a USFA Championship in 2005, an AFA runner-up finish in 2004 and an AFA title in 2002.

Branham is a community youth volunteer, a Cadet teacher and she also lettered in basketball where she was an all-conference performer in 2007.

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Kayla Braud will come to Bama from Marist High in Eugene, Oregon. "We saw Kayla at 16-under nationals in Sioux Falls, South Dakota two summers ago and loved her athleticism,"Murphy said. "She will bring a great lefty offensive game and speed to our offense. She brings great academic credentials."

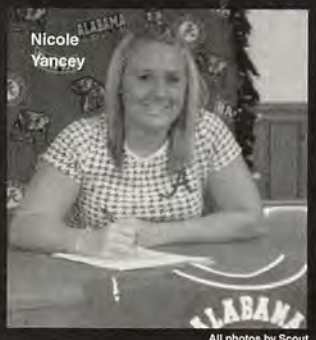
Braud has etched her name in the Oregon record books and

Kayla Braud

Courtney Conley

Keima Davis

Lauren Sewell


Nicole Yancey

All photos by Scout

has been a key component to the Marist state championship squad. The 5-6 infielder/outfielder helped Marist to the Oregon 4A title and was named Oregon 4A Player of the Year.

Braud was named first-team all-league and the Sky-Em League Player of the Year. She was one of 10 nominees for Maxpreps.com Girls National Athlete of the Year and was featured in Sports Illustrated in "Faces in the Crowd" on June 23, 2008.

At the plate Braud is riding a national high school record 73-game hitting streak. She batted .645 with three home runs and 65 runs scored. Braud was a perfect 28-for-28 in thefts. For her prep career she is batting .603 and sports a .700 on base percentage. Braud is 99-for-104 on the base paths.

On her club squad the Eugene Thunder, Braud batted a team leading .447 with a .602 on base percentage and 20 RBI. Braud has also earned three letters in soccer where she has been named to the all-league first-team and helped lead her team to back-to-back state runner up finishes.

Courtney Conley of Eureka High in St. Louis led her St. Louis Chaos team to a national runner-up finish at 16 ASA nationals last summer. She is one of two players from Chaos to sign with Bama.

Conley plays for coach Brad Wallach at EHS and has garnered numerous accolades. The corner infielder was named to the all-conference, all-district, all-region, all-metro and all-state teams. Conley was also named the Gatorade Player of the Year and the Post Dispatch Player of the Year in 2007.

The 5-9 infielder was an Under Armour All-America for the Chaos team of Coach Bob Furrer. She is a National Honor Society student.

Keima Davis will join the Tide from Deerfield Beach, Florida, where she plays at American Heritage Boca/Delray School. Murphy said, "She has the potential to be a five-tool softball player who already possesses great power and speed."

Davis was school MVP as she batted .563. She was all-area. She also plays for the Davie Power ASA summer team. She also lettered in basketball and is related to former Penn State and current Seattle Seahawks wide receiver Bobby Engram.

Pitcher Lauren Sewell will join the Tide from Pembroke Pines, Florida, where she stars for Pines Charter High School. Murphy said, "She has pitched in ASA gold competition for three summers and led her high school team to a number one national ranking and a runner-up finish in the Florida high school state championships. She has been a winner in all levels of softball and we see her getting even better in college."

Sewell has garnered many accolades through her high school and club careers. In 2007, playing under the direction of her high school coach Tom Fadul, the pitcher was named to the all-state team, National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) All-South Region team and NFCA High School All-America third team.

Sewell was named to the Sun Sentinel All-County first team in 2007 and earned back-to-back second team all-county accolades in 2005 and 2006. The hurler was also named to the Miami Herald first team in three straight seasons.

In club play, Sewell competed for the Florida Gold and helped the team led by Coach Johnny Broyles advance to the Gold Nationals in 2008.

The high school senior also played for her school's volleyball team.

Nicole Yancey will join the Tide from Whitesburg, Georgia, where she plays for Central Carrollton High School.

"We believe Nicole is one of the best power hitters in the nation and will have a great impact for the Tide for years to come," Murphy said. "She was heavily recruited but was an early Alabama commit. We are very excited to see her in Crimson."

The power hitter was named the Carroll County Player of the Year in back-to-back seasons (2006-07). Yancey is in the adidas top 100 and was named an Under Armour All-America. Yancey has been named first-team All-Region in back-to-back-to-back seasons and was the 3A Player of the Year in 2007.

Yancey helped her team to region titles in 2005-07. She also led the state in walks with 55 and was named the offensive MVP in 2005.

Yancey holds the Georgia state record for home runs in a season with 16 and a career with 40. She also holds her high school record for round trippers in a single game with three. Her first career home run happened to be a grand slam. She plays for the Georgia Elite club team that finished 13th at Gold Nationals.

GYMNASTICS

One of the true success stories of Alabama athletics is Crimson Tide gymnastics under Coach Sarah Patterson. Bama has added three signees.

"We're very excited to have these ladies join the Alabama gymnastics family," Patterson, in her 31st season at Alabama, said.

"All three of them are tremendous athletes who will be able to help us in a variety of areas. Most importantly to us though is that they are committed to excellence in both the gym and in the classroom."

The new Tide gymnasts are Ashley Sledge, Marissa Gutierrez and Caitlin Sullivan. Here is a look at each:

Ashley Sledge said that she made the decision to compete for the Crimson Tide a long time ago. "I lived in Birmingham until I was 9, so I was always a Bama fan," Sledge said. "I began attending the Alabama Gymnastics Camps when I was 6 years old and it was then that I decided I wanted to go to The University of Alabama. The Alabama gymnasts were my heroes and I was determined to be just like them."

Even though she grew up an Alabama gymnastics fan, Sledge's recruiting trip to Tuscaloosa showed her the complete Crimson Tide picture.

"I loved the gym and the coaches of course," Sledge said. "But I really got to see other parts of The University that I hadn't seen before. I immediately fell in love with the school."

Knowing Sledge since she started as a gymnast gave Patterson the opportunity to watch her develop as a gymnast and a person over the years.

"We have known Ashley since she was six and started coming to our camp in the summers, so we have literally watched her grow up," Patterson said. "A tremendous all-around competitor, Alabama fans will love her explosiveness and powerful vault and tumbling skills."

Now living in Fairview Heights, Illinois, Sledge is coached by Donna Berutti, Patrick Hulliung and Scott King at World Class Gymnastics. She was named the Region 5 Athlete of the Year after winning the 2005 Junior Olympic National All-Around title. In 2007 she was third in the all-around at J.O. Nationals after winning the Illinois State All-Around Championship. Sledge, who twice attended camps at the Olympic Training Center, won the all-around at both the 2008 Navy Pier and Circle of Stars meets.

She attends Belleville East High School where she has been on the honor roll her entire career.

It didn't take Marissa Gutierrez long to figure out that Alabama was the place for her. "I absolutely fell in love with the campus the minute I saw it," she said. "I love the atmosphere and just everything about it. The coaching staff is amazing as is the team." She is coached by Debbie Kaitchuk and Deana Parish, who also mentored former Alabama NCAA Champion André Pickens, and J.P. Lavacheny at The WGA Texans.

"Marissa possesses a wonderful combination of power and style and great balance as an all-around competitor that will make her an immediate fan favorite," Patterson said.

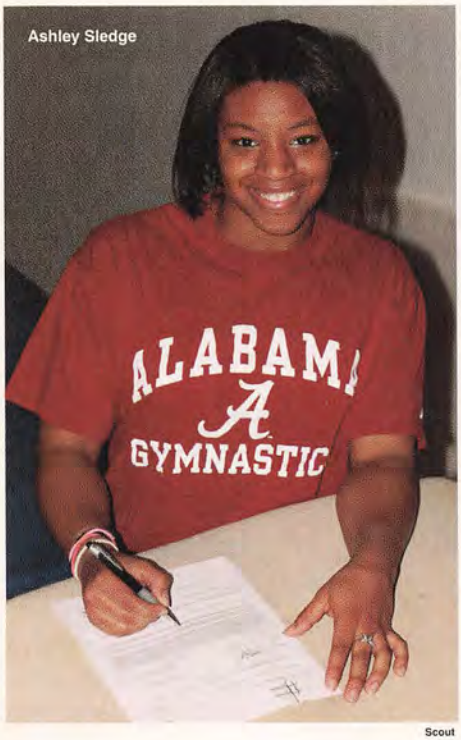
At the 2006 Junior Olympic National Championships, the Houston, Texas, native earned silver on the vault. She finished sixth on the vault and 15th in the all-around at the 2005 J.O. Championships. She also won the 2008 Texas State vault and balance beam titles. She attends Clear Brook High School.

Caitlin Sullivan is wasting no time getting her Alabama career started. The Elkhart, Indiana, native was slated to graduate from high school early and join the Crimson Tide this spring.

"Caitlin wanted to be a part of the 2009 team and she was able to accelerate her graduation and make that happen," Patterson said. "She'll be a great addition to the team. Her beautiful lines and wonderful artistic gymnastics make her a joy to watch."

It was the Crimson Tide's balance that played the biggest part in Sullivan's decision to join Alabama.

"Alabama has a great reputation for being both academically and athletically successful," Sullivan said. "I love the coaching staff and the team. The campus is beautiful. It is a perfect fit for me; it has everything I am looking for in a university."



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A member of the 2003-04 USA National team, Sullivan was fifth in the all-around and second on the floor exercise at the 2003 USA National Championships. She also took sixth in the all-around at the American Classic. She was the 2002 Junior Olympic All-Around Champion, taking second on the floor exercise and balance beam and earning a place on the J.O. National Team as well.

Sullivan, who is coached by Shannon Hunt at Cutting Edge Athletics, finished 10th in the all-around at the 2008 J.O. Nationals and took fourth on the balance beam and seventh on the floor exercise.

She attends Elkhart Central High School where she has been a four-year member of the honor roll. Co-captain of the Elkhart Central gymnastics team in 2007, she also competed in track and field, earning rookie of the year honors after her initial season pole vaulting.

MEN'S TENNIS

Alabama Men's Tennis Coach Billy Pate is adding Jan Chadwell and Harris Barnard to the Bama roster for the 2009-10 season.

"One thing we set out to do the last few years was to focus on attracting the best U.S. players with an emphasis on the top Southern players," said Pate. "We have continued to do that with two outstanding commitments in Ian and Harris."

Chadwell, a native of Franklin, Tennessee, is ranked number 20 in the class of 2009 by TennisRecruiting.net. His southern junior singles tennis career includes two USTA Southern Championship wins along with the 2008 18s Southern Closed Doubles title. Chadwell was chosen to represent the USTA Southern Section the previous three years at national team competitions and was a member of the squad that win the National 16s Intersectional Team Championship in 2007.

"Ian is a fantastic addition for us, and we are delighted that he will be joining our squad," Pate added. "He had a distinguished junior career, and he will continue to get better and better. Ian is a tremendously intense competitor and hard worker and will be an ideal team guy. He's a great fit for our program, and I'm confident he's going to have an outstanding career at Alabama."

As part of the Centennial High School tennis team, Chadwell has won the Tennessee High School State Championship in division I AAA as a freshman, sophomore and junior losing just one match in three seasons. This season, he will by vying for a fourth-straight championship which hasn't been accomplished in the state of Tennessee since 1964. The Tennessean named him Boys Tennis Player of the Year in both 2006 and 2008. Chadwell is also the recipient of several sportsmanship awards including the Wes Richards Sportsmanship Award that he was presented at the 2007 National Championship in Kalamazoo, Michigan; the Sportsmanship Award at the 2007 International Tennis Federation Fall Circuit in El Paso, Texas; and the Sportsman Award at the 2006 Southern 16s Closed Championship.

Barnard, who hails from Dothan, has been playing USTA Junior Tennis since the age of nine. As a 16 year old, he ranked number one in the state, top 15 in the Southern Section and top 100 nationally. Barnard, a TennisRecruiting.net four-star recruit, is ranked in the top 150 in his class. He is currently enrolled at the Saviano Tennis Academy in Sunrise, Florida, where he trains under Nick Saviano as well as former LSU Tiger Jesse Smatt.

"Harris is another great addition to our team from the Southern section and has experienced a great deal of success on the national level," said Pate. "Harris has a very balanced and versatile game and possesses a great deal of upside. He has had an outstanding junior career and has been ranked as the top player in the state. He's an exceptionally hard worker, and I expect his game to grow rapidly in our environment."

Barnard will finish out his high school career at Northview in Dothan where he will play 6A tennis for the Cougars. Previously, he attended Houston Academy where he represented the Raiders as a number one doubles champion and number two singles finalist as a freshman.

"Ian and Harris are both outstanding young men who are the type of individuals who will represent our University with the utmost in class and integrity," Pate said.

Alabama Women's Tennis Coach Jenny Mainz announced the signing of standout Alexa Guarachi, who is rated as the number 10 senior college prospect in the country by tennisrecruiting.net. She is estimated to be the seventh generation in her family to attend The Capstone.

"We are thrilled to have Alexa join our Alabama family," said Mainz. "Alexa comes from a rich tradition of Alabama ties as she is the seventh generation to be a part of the Crimson Tide. "It's very exciting to have a commitment from someone that has always bled Crimson and is so intent on leaving a lasting legacy at Alabama. Alexa certainly possesses the talent, desire and leadership to be an integral part of our women's tennis program. She undoubtedly will be a difference-maker immediately."

Guarachi is ranked top 80 in the world in juniors by the International Tennis Federation (ITF) in addition to being ranked top 10 nationally in juniors. She has played in all four Tennis Grand Slams, the French Open, Australian Open, U.S. Open and Wimbledon. Guarachi also won the coveted U.S. National Clay Court Singles Championship at the age of 14. She currently holds a Women's Tennis Association (WTA) ranking.

"Alexa's experience is vast as she has traveled the world playing in over 23 countries," added Mainz. "She is a great competitor and knows how to win. Alexa has delivered some impressive results capturing over five ITF titles in her junior career. I'm confident that she has the tools and knowledge to continue on this successful path at The Capstone."

Guarachi's family has multiple ties to Alabama. Her father, Fernando, played tennis for the Tide in the 1970s and was the first international player recruited for the men's program. Her great grandfather, Hilmon Holley, was a member of the 1930 National Championship football team. Julia Tutwiler, who has a dormitory named after her on campus, is Guarachi's fourth great aunt. Colonel McCorvey, another prominent Capstone figure, is her fourth great grandfather.

The Destin, Florida, native will join the Tide after completing her high school career. Guarachi was home-schooled through Florida Virtual School and will attend South Walton High School for her last semester before graduating. Her parents are Fernando and Holley Guarachi, and she has one sister, Carolina,

and one brother, Stefan. Guarachi plans to pursue a degree in a sports oriented field at Alabama.

VOLLEYBALL

Alabama Volleyball Head Coach Judy Green announced the signing of Kayla Fitterer of Edwardsville, Illinois. She is ranked number 81 on Prepvolleyball.com's 2009 Senior Aces list.

Green said, "She's a very physical type of outside hitter who possesses very good athleticism. Kayla has a great, powerful arm swing. However, what really attracted us to her was that she is a complete person. She excels both on the court and in the classroom and is a big part of her community back in Edwardsville."

Fitterer is the most highly recruited player in Edwardsville history. She led her team to back-to-back conference and regional championships and advanced to the sectional championships this season. During her sophomore season at nearby Althoff High School, Fitterer guided her team to conference, regional, sectional and super-sectional championships after advancing to the regional championships her freshman campaign.

In 2007, she was among the nation's top recruits being named to Prepvolleyball.com's Top 50 Recruits in the 2009 Class. In addition, she was named the Alton Telegraph Large School Volleyball Player of the Year, all-state, News-Democrat AA all-area second team and Southwestern Conference first team. At the conclusion of her sophomore season, Fitterer was second team all-state, all-area, all-conference. She was honorable mention all-state as a freshman.

She was a four-year varsity starter throughout high school and currently holds her school's career kills record with 1,259.

Fitterer is also active in volleyball outside of her high school having trained at the U.S. Olympic Training Center as part of the High Performance program. Known as the pipeline for young volleyball athletes to reach the elite levels of the sport, the High Performance program helps to train and provide top-level competition to those in attendance. In 2006, Fitterer was a member of the USA Volleyball Youth National A2 Team.

WOMEN'S GOLF

Mic Potter, Alabama women's golf coach, announced the signing of Jennifer Kirby, who will come to The University from Paris, Ontario Canada.

Potter said, "She has an outstanding junior and amateur record playing in both the United States and Canada. The most exciting thing about her is her upside and she will keep getting better and better."

Kirby attends Paris District High School where she has also competed in volleyball and basketball. Kirby is coached by Sean Foley, who also instructs the likes of professional golfers Stephen Ames, Sean O'Hair and Hunter Mahan.

Kirby was the 2008 Ontario Provincial Champion as a junior and was named the Junior Athlete of the Year. Kirby is also a member of the Canadian National Team. Kirby has shot a 67 and finished fourth at the U.S. Junior Girls Championship.

SWIMMING AND DIVING

The men's team has signed what Coach Eric McIlquham terms "easily the best Alabama class in recent memory," while the women's team reeled in one of the nation's top distance prospects.

"What makes this class so good is that it's top quality from top to bottom," McIlquham said. "Walking in the door, these are guys who are going to make an immediate impact for our program at the highest levels."

The Crimson Tide men inked five in the early signing period while the women added one. Oscar Aldabe, Vlad Caciuc, Jake Reynolds, Brandon Lowe and Reese Shirey will join the men's team for the 2009-10 season while Jenna Gallo will join the women's team.

Two of the men's signees have strong connections to the Crimson Tide. Oscar Aldabe is the son of former Crimson Tide All-Americas Ricardo Aldabe and the former Katrine Bomstad, while Reese Shirey's brother Austin finished his Alabama career last season.

Here is a look at the signees:

Oscar Aldabe from the Bolles School in Jacksonville, Florida, is the first Alabama swimmer to be a double, legacy, Aldabe swims for Sergio Lopez. He won a bronze medal in the 400 IM at the 2005 Spanish National Championships and was eighth in the 400 IM at the 2006 Spanish Open. He was named to the Florida Times-Union's All-Coast team.

Vlad Caciuc is from the Sport High School in Bogda Voda, Romania. He is the Romanian Junior National record holder in the 50- and 100-meter freestyles. He swims for Adrian Gherghel at LSP-MBV. He earned a bronze medal at the 2008 European Junior Championships in the 50 freestyle

Brandon Lowe of Patrick Henry High School in San Diego, California, is a two-time prep All-America. He swims for Dave Kilmer and College Area Swim Team. Lowe holds the Patrick Henry High School record in the 200 freestyle and has competed at the 2007 and 2008 USA Junior National Championship and has qualified for the upcoming USA Senior National Championships.

Jake Reynolds from Prattville High School was the 2006 Alabama high school 100 backstroke champion in 2006. He swims for Paul Mielke at Montgomery YMCA. He also helped Prattville to two soccer state championships.

Another Alabamian added to the men's team is Reese Shirey of Muscle Shoals and the Baylor School in Chattanooga. A prep All-America, he is the Baylor School record holder in the 100 yard backstroke, the independent school national record holder in the 100 meter short course backstroke, and competed at the 2008 Olympic Trials. Reese, a USA Swimming Scholastic All-American, has qualified to compete at the 2009 World Championship Trials slated for this July in Indianapolis, Ind. Coached by Dan Flack, he helped lead Baylor to the Independent Schools National Championship and the Tennessee State Championship in 2008.

For the women's team, Bama has signed Jenna Gallo of Lake Worth, Florida, where she attends Park Vista Community High School. A three-year All-America, Gallo holds the Palm Beach County record in the 500 freestyle and finaled at the 200 and 500 freestyles at the recent Florida High School championships. She swims for Tim Bruce at Park Vista Community High School and Sid Cassidy at Saint Andrew's Swimming. A USA Senior National qualifier, she served as team captain of both her Park Vista and Saint Andrew's teams. ■

It's A Sweet Season

No one could have asked for more

The vacant semicircle plot overlooking the plaza at the north end zone of Bryant-Denny Stadium will remain vacant, at least for another year. That spot is in anticipation of a bronze statue, similar to the ones honoring previous Alabama coaches who have won national championships: Wallace Wade, Frank Thomas, Paul Bryant and Gene Stallings.

There is reason to believe a monument to Nick Saban will be there in the near future, but it won't be this year. Alabama's bid for the 2008 national championship came tantalizingly close as the Crimson Tide was ranked number one in the nation for much of the season. But the quest to play in the BCS national championship game was ended by Florida in the Southeastern Conference championship tilt. The Gators quarterback, Tim Tebow, and the Florida defense made the fourth quarter plays to come from behind and down Bama, 31-20.

Alabama's 12-0 regular season performance (including 8-0 in SEC games) was good enough to keep the Crimson Tide in the BCS bowl picture, if not the national title pool. Bama's Sugar Bowl opponent, Utah, is not a team from a BCS conference, but the Utes played their way into the game with a 12-0 season. (It's interesting that disparaging comments regarding the Tide's bowl opponent came primarily from those whose team did not get into any bowl game.)

To say that Alabama is ahead of schedule cuts two ways. One, Saban doesn't have a schedule. He has a process, that everyone associated with the program to do everything the correct way and good results will follow. But if he did have a schedule, he would be way ahead of it.

Think back. Alabama was picked to finish in the middle of the pack in the SEC Western Division. Bama had only nine scholarshipped seniors and was playing a schedule that included road games against a handful of top ten teams, plus another top ten team, Auburn, in Bryant-Denny Stadium. Instead, the Tide had wrapped up that SEC West title and the berth in the SEC Championship game with a road win over defending national champion LSU. Bama isn't going to win the national championship this season, but the Tide was one of the main topics of conversation regarding that title. Bama came within a few plays of making it to Miami to play Oklahoma for number one.

Nick Saban has Bama looking to be number one

Stuart McNair

Auburn had expected to put a seventh consecutive loss on Alabama. Instead, the Auburns can use their finger counting to seven for the number of losses they had this year. And more than that for the number of millions it cost them when they fired their coach and went looking for another.

Meanwhile, going to the Sugar Bowl is A-OK.

Both teams in the 75th annual Sugar Bowl will come in with 12 victories. Alabama, which was ranked number one for most of the last half of the season, is at 12-1, while Utah is 12-0.

Big bowl games are old hat for Alabama, but not for current Crimson Tide players. Bama has not been in a BCS bowl game since the 1999 Alabama team lost to Michigan, 35-34, in overtime in the Orange Bowl. It will be the Tide's first Sugar Bowl game since the 1992 team destroyed Miami, 34-13, to win the national championship.

The biggest bowl game current Tide players have been to is the Cotton Bowl when a handful of seniors were on the squad that defeated Texas Tech, 13-10. The two most recent bowl appearances for Alabama are Independence Bowl outings in Shreveport, a 30-24 win over Colorado last year, a 34-31 loss to Oklahoma State at the end of the 2006 season.

But Alabama is the biggest name in college football bowl games.

Coach Nick Saban's 2008 team will be extending the Bama national record of bowl appearances to 56.

Alabama will also be attempting to extend its national record for bowl victories to 32. Alabama is 31-21-3 in bowl games.

Rashad Johnson had All-America year for Tide

Stuart McNair

And Alabama will be making its second attempt to post all-time victory number 800.

Alabama has an 8-4 record in Sugar Bowl games.

Sugar Bowl Chief Executive Officer Paul Hoolahan seemed pleased to have the Crimson Tide. In a telephone conference call with the media and with both Saban and Utah Coach Kyle Whittingham listening, Hoolahan said, "We can't be more excited than with the matchup we've been able to put together here. This is a dream come true. This is the 75th anniversary of the (first) playing of the Sugar Bowl Classic and to be able to bring back a school with the history and tradition and the long-term association with the Sugar Bowl that Alabama has had is just a remarkable occurrence for us. It's a gift from heaven as far as we're concerned. It's a great, great situation to a have such a highly ranked team and such a deserving team. Needless to say, we're equally as impressed with the opponent, another highly ranked team."

Saban said, "I'm very proud of what our football team was able to accomplish."

He added, "Football is a lot like life. You get what you expect, and these guys had a high standard for how they competed and how they played."

He said the legacy of the 2008 Alabama seniors is that they be remembered as "the team that brought a lot of pride back to The University of Alabama, to the football program, and to the people of the state of Alabama who support it."

Alabama's players elected permanent team captains, including center Antoine Caldwell and safety Rashad Johnson, who were also captains in 2007, and quarterback John Parker Wilson. Caldwell and Johnson join S.B. Slone (1894, 1896), W.E. Drennen (1900-01), W.S. Wyatt (1903-04), Al Clemens (1921, 1923), and Jarret Johnson and Tyler Watts (both 2001-02) as Alabama's two-time captains.

Junior running back Glen Coffee was named the team's Most Valuable Player after posting the fourth highest single season rushing total (1,347 yards) in school history. Wilson and junior left tackle Andre Smith shared Offensive Player of the Year honors. Wilson set every Alabama passing record and in his third year as a starter quarterbacked the tide to a 12-1 record going into the Sugar Bowl. Smith, a junior and three-year starter, allowed only one sack this season.

Johnson and sophomore linebacker Rolando McClain shared Defensive Player of the Year honors. McClain led the Tide with 91 tackles and 11 and a half tackles for loss. Johnson was second in tackles with 82 and led the Tide with five interceptions and 11 pass break-ups.

Junior Javier Arenas, P.J. Fitzgerald and Leigh Tiffin won Special team Player of the Year honors. Arenas led the Tide in punt returns and kickoff returns and had two punt returns for touchdowns. Tiffin was the team's leading scorer with 101 points (44-45 extra point kicks, 19-26 field goals). Fitzgerald averaged a career-best 41.1 yards on 55 punts.

Award Winners:

Unsung Hero: Kareem Jackson, Nikita Stover, Nick Walker, Justin Woodall.
Outstanding Senior Scholar: Bobby Greenwood
Commitment to Academic Excellence: Charlie Higgenbotham, Greg McElroy, Charlie Kirschman.
Iron Man: Drew Davis, Marlon Davis, Cory Reamer, Roy Upchurch.
Most Inspiring: Antoine Caldwell
Pat Trammell: Bobby Greenwood, Travis McCall
Outstanding Defensive Performer: Rolando McClain, Rashad Johnson
Up-Front: Brandon Deaderick, Brandon Fanney, Mike Johnson, Andre Smith
Defensive Achievement: Terrence Cody, Dont'a Hightower
Offensive Achievement: Mark Ingram, Julio Jones
President's Award: Javier Arenas, Antoine Caldwell, Glen Coffee, Rashad Johnson
Jefferson County Distinguished **Alumnus:** Bart Starr
Special Teams Player of the Year: Javier Arenas, Leigh Tiffin, P.J. Fitzgerald
Offensive Player of the Year: Andre Smith, John Parker Wilson

Defensive Player of the Year: Rolando McClain, Rashad Johnson
Most Valuable Player: Glen Coffee
Captains: Antoine Caldwell, Rashad Johnson, John Parker Wilson
In other Alabama football news:
Four Alabama players were selected All-America by the American Football Coaches Association. Senior center Antoine Caldwell, junior nose guard Terrence Cody, senior free safety Rashad Johnson and junior left tackle Andre Smith were selected to the 25-man team. It marks just the fourth time in school history that four Tide players have earned first-team All-America honors in the same season (1964, 1966 and 1974).

"It is a special honor and I think I can speak for all four of us," Johnson said. "We are excited and it is truly a blessing. I want to thank all of our teammates because without their efforts we might have gone unnoticed."

Smith (Birmingham) was a finalist for the Outland Trophy and the Rotary Lombardi Award while Caldwell (Montgomery) was a finalist for the Rimington Trophy, which goes to the nation's top center. McClain was a finalist for the Butkus Award for the nation's top linebacker.

The Little Rock (Arkansas) Touchdown Club selected Saban as SEC Coach of the Year and Johnson as SEC Defensive Player of the Year.

The club named Florida quarterback Tim Tebow the SEC Offensive Player of the Year and Texas quarterback Colt McCoy as National Player of the Year.

No fewer than 12 Alabama football players were selected on various All-SEC honor squads. Among them are:

Running backs Glen Coffee and Mark Ingram, offensive tackle Andre Smith, offensive guard Mike Johnson, center Antoine Caldwell, wide receiver Julio Jones, defensive tackle Terrence Cody, defensive end Bobby Greenwood, linebacker Rolando McClain, safety Rashad Johnson, cornerback/kick returner Javier Arenas, and placekicker Leigh Tiffin.

At the SEC Championship Game, it was announced that the 1979 Alabama Crimson Tide of Coach Paul Bryant had been voted the greatest SEC team of all time. Bama finished first and second as the 1979 team beat out the 1992 Tide of Coach Gene Stallings.

Bryant's only 12-win team, the 1979 Crimson Tide, edged out the 1992 Alabama team, in an all-Alabama final at the 2008 SEC Fan Fest at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta. The 1979 team won a vote by telecommunications customers as AT&T's All-Time Greatest SEC Team.

Don McNeal, a captain on the 1979 team, accepted the AT&T Trophy on behalf of his team.

The 1979 Alabama team posted a 12-0 record and clinched Bryant's sixth and final national championship with a win over Arkansas in the Sugar Bowl.

The 1992 team went 13-0 for Stallings en route to the school's 12th national title. Alabama defeated Miami, 34-13, in the Sugar Bowl.

Former Alabama All-America players Lee Roy Jordan and John Hannah were named to the 75th Anniversary Orange Bowl Team. The Orange Bowl Association is commemorating the Orange Bowl's 75 years. The team selected by fans from a list nominated by a panel of college football sports writers consists of all 11 offensive and defensive positions, plus a punter, a kicker and two coaches.

Jordan led Alabama to a 17-0 win over Oklahoma in the 1963 Orange Bowl, which was attended by President John F. Kennedy. Jordan set an NCAA bowl record with 31 tackles in the win over the Sooners.

Hannah is considered one of the game's greatest offensive linemen. He played in the 1972 Orange Bowl against the Nebraska Cornhuskers in a game that decided the national championship.

When Alabama added Tim Davis to the football staff as director of player personnel last February, it seemed to be an embarrassment of riches for the Crimson Tide. There was also the suspicion that Davis, one of the finest offensive line coaches in the nation, wouldn't be off the field for long. There was also the thought that Davis was insurance against Joe Pendry, the Crimson Tide's veteran offensive line coach, leaving.

University of Alabama

It was hardly a surprise that Davis was not out of coaching long. With no on-the-field position available at Alabama, Davis has been tapped by Minnesota to be the Gophers' running game coordinator and offensive line coach.

Davis has a wealth of collegiate and professional coaching experience. In addition to his time with Saban at Alabama, he was on Saban's staff as an assistant offensive line coach with the Miami Dolphins

Prior to his time in Miami, Davis spent three seasons (2002-04) coaching the offensive line at USC. USC won two national championships and three major bowl games in the three seasons Davis was with the Trojans.

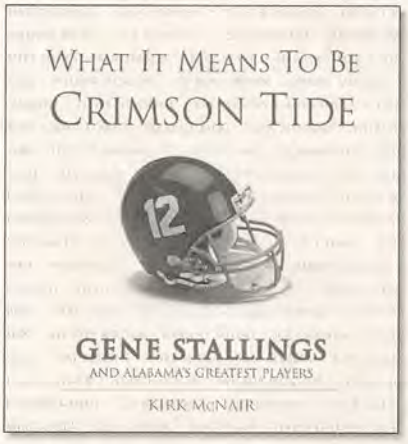
Davis left Tuscaloosa just before the Tide began preparations to play his alma mater in the Sugar Bowl. Davis was a three-year letterman at Utah, playing offensive tackle for the Utes from 1978-80. ■

What It Means To Be Crimson Tide

Gene Stallings and Alabama's Greatest Players

Alabama football means championships and All-America players and, for many, a man in a houndstooth hat. Some 60 Alabama players who performed over a 75-year period tell us "What It Means To Be Crimson Tide."

Former Alabama Coach Gene Stallings and 'BAMA Editor Kirk McNair selected players who tell the stories of games and practices, coaches and teammates. The story of "What It Means To Be Crimson Tide."



Among those featured are Harry Gilmer, Bart Starr, Lee Roy Jordan, Joe Namath, Ken Stabler, Johnny Musso, John Hannah, Ozzie Newsome, and Jay Barker.

Gene Stallings reveals much of his philosophy and reveals why he did NOT follow Paul Bryant as Alabama head football coach in 1983. Kirk McNair introduces the players.

"What It Means To Be Crimson Tide–Gene Stallings and Alabama's Greatest Players" is a hardcover book of over 300 pages in an oversized format with archival photographs throughout. To order ($27.95 plus tax, shipping and handling) call 1-205-345-5074. You may request a personalized autograph from Kirk McNair.

Questions Answered

Facts regarding mechanics of recruiting

National Signing Day (February 4) for high school and junior college football prospects to sign with colleges is fast approaching, and the Alabama Crimson Tide coaching staff is working hard to pull in another top rated class. This recruiting section is devoted to Frequently Asked Questions (other than those questions about prospects and the likelihood of Bama landing them).

The Contact Period:
The Contact Period began November 30 and lasts until January 31. Six in-person off-campus contacts per prospective student-athlete are permitted during the time period with not more than one permitted in any calendar week or partial calendar week. Contact Period means it is permissible for authorized athletics department staff members to make in-person, off-campus recruiting contacts and evaluations.

Extra Quiet Period:
These days include December 21-January 4, January 11.

The Dead Period:
The Dead Period is January 12-15. The Institutional staff members may have contact with a prospective student-athlete who has been admitted for mid-year enrollment, provided the prospect has signed a National Letter of Intent or other offer of admission and/or financial aid to attend the institution; or is required to be on campus to attend institutional orientation sessions for all students.

Dead Period:
Not permissible to make in-person recruiting contacts or evaluations on- or off-campus or permit official or unofficial visits.

The Quiet Period:
The Quiet Period resumes for January 16-17. Contact is allowed beginning January 18 until February 1.

Quiet Period: permissible to make in-person recruiting contacts only on the member institution's campus.

The **Dead Period** resumes for February 2-5.
After National Signing Day the **Quiet Period** is from February 6-April 15.

The Evaluation Period starts April 15 and continues through May 31. Four weeks (excluding Memorial Day and Sundays) in this six-week period selected at the discretion of the member institution and designated in writing in the office of the director of athletics constitute the evaluation period for the institution.

Evaluation Period: permissible for authorized athletics department staff to be involved in off-campus activities to assess academic qualifications and playing abililties. No in-person, off-campus recruiting contacts with a prospective student-athlete are permitted.

An authorized off-campus recruiter may use one evaluation to assess the prospective student-athlete's athletics ability and one evaluation to assess the prospective student-athlete's academics qualifications during this evaluation period.

If an institution's coaching staff member conducts both an athletics and an academics evaluation of the prospective student-athlete on the same day during this evaluation period, the institution shall be charged with the use of an academics evaluation only and shall be permitted to conduct a second athletics evaluation of the prospect student-athlete on a separate day during this evaluation period.
June 1-July 31 the **Quiet Period** Resumes

The Quiet Period:
The Quiet Period is August 1 through November 29. Coaches are allowed 42 evaluation days during the months of September, October and November. These days are selected at the discretion of the university Authorized off-campus recruiters shall not visit a prospective student-athlete's educational institution on more than one calendar day during this period.

What is a National Letter of Intent?
The National Letter of Intent (NLI) is a binding agreement between a prospective student-athlete and an institution in which the institution agrees to provide a prospective student-athlete who is admitted to the institution and is eligible for financial aid under NCAA rules athletics aid for one academic year in exchange for the prospective student-athlete's agreement to attend the institution for one academic year.

All colleges and universities that participate in the NLI program agree to not recruit a prospective student-athlete once he

or she signs an NLI with another college or university. Therefore, a prospective student-athlete who signs an NLI should no longer receive recruiting contacts and calls and is ensured an athletics scholarship for one academic year.

The NLI must be accompanied by an institutional financial aid agreement. If the prospective student-athlete does not enroll at that institution for a full academic year, he or she may be subject to specific penalties, including loss of a season of eligibility and a mandatory residence requirement.

Breach of NLI by Student-Athlete Prior to Initial Enrollment, Practice and Competition in Order to Attend Another Institution:
If a prospective student-athlete signs an NLI, the student-athlete is committed to attend that institution for his/her initial year of collegiate enrollment. If he/she does not attend the signing institution or attend that institution for less than one academic year and enrolls in another college that participates in the NLI program, there may be eligibility ramifications.

The basic penalty may preclude the student-athlete from representing the second college until having completed one academic year in residence at the latter institution, and the student-athlete may lose one season of competition in all sports.

The Use of Technology in the Recruiting Process:
As technological initiatives increase, the NCAA recognizes the need for guidelines on the use of computers and the Internet in the recruiting process. The NCAA Division I Management Council has requested that all current NCAA legislation, official interpretations, staff interpretations and legislative proposals related to the use of technology in the recruiting process be made available to the membership through NCAA Online.

Current NCAA Legislation

13.02.13 Telephone Calls. In Divisions I and II, facsimiles and other electronically transmitted correspondence shall not be considered telephone calls. In Division I, prearranged electronically transmitted correspondence between an authorized institutional staff member and one or more prospects shall be considered a telephone call.

13.4.1 Divisions I and II-Printed Recruiting Materials. A Division I or Division II institution may not provide recruiting materials to a prospect (including general correspondence related to athletics) until September 1 at the beginning of the prospect's junior year in high school.

Member institutions are permitted to provide only the printed materials listed below to prospects, coaches of prospects or any other individual responsible for teaching or directing an activity in which a prospect is involved.

A member institution is not permitted to provide prospects with any recruiting materials not listed below (e.g., films, videotapes, original newspaper clippings in Division I). Violations of this bylaw shall be considered institutional violations per 2.8.1; however, they shall not affect the prospective student-athlete's eligibility.

d. Electronic Transmissions-Divisions I and II. Facsimiles and electronic mail may be sent to a prospect. Prearranged electronically transmitted correspondence between an authorized institutional staff member and one or more prospects shall be considered a telephone call.

13.4.2 Divisions I and II-Video/Audio Materials. A Division I or Division II institution may not produce video/audio materials to show or send to a prospect except as specified in 13.4.2.1, 13.4.2.2 and 13.4.2.3. Violations of this bylaw shall be considered institutional violations per 2.8.1; however, they shall not affect the prospective student-athlete's eligibility.

13.4.2.1 Highlight Film/Videotape/Audio Tape. An institution may show a highlight film/videotape/audio tape to a prospect or the prospect's coach, but may not send it to or leave it with the prospect or coach.

Highlight films/videotapes/audio tapes are "game clips" that contain informational material that is related to a particular event or sports season. Any narration on the highlight film/videotape/audio tape must relate specifically to the event or sports season.

Coaching Staff Member Contacting Prospect through Video Conference: (I) The NCAA Division I Management Council used its authority set forth in NCAA Constitution 5.4.1.2.1.5 to reverse a previous Council-approved official interpretation and agreed that it is permissible for an institution's coaching staff member to engage in face-to-face contact with a prospect via video conference, provided such contact counts as a recruiting contact and occurs during a permissible contact period.

(Editor's Note: This was big news last spring when Alabama Coach Nick Saban and Athens High School defensive end William Ming had a video conference. At the time the NCAA declared it to be only a telephone call from the prospect to the coach. This could be called the Saban Rule II since the NCAA has already limited the amount of off-campus recruiting the head coach can do after Saban visited over 100 schools in the spring, 2007, evaluation period.)

Electronic Mail Attachments: (I) The NCAA Division I Management Council used its authority set forth in NCAA Constitution 5.4.1.2.1.5 to reverse a previous Council-approved official interpretation and agreed that it is permissible for an institution's coaching staff member to include color attachments with electronic mail correspondence sent to prospective student-athletes.

Coaches Contacting Prospects Through a Pager. (I) The use of a pager to contact a prospect is considered a telephone call. If a pager permits a text message to be displayed, an institutional coaching staff member who leaves a message in excess of a greeting is considered to have made a telephone contact.

Summer Camp Advertisements on the Internet. (I) An institution may advertise its camp and clinic on a recruiting publication's Web site provided the format of such advertisements is identical and the Web site camp directory includes multiple listings of summer camps. The subcommittee noted that the half-page size restriction applicable to advertisements in printed publications is not applicable to advertisements placed on the Internet.

Prearranged Electronic Communication. (I) Pursuant to Proposal No. 99-101, electronically transmitted correspondence between an institutional staff member and a prospective student-athlete shall be considered prearranged whenever a time and method for such electronic correspondence has been designated in advance.

The subcommittee recommended that the NCAA Division I Management Council, pursuant to NCAA Constitution 5.4.1.1.1, consider using its authority to modify Proposal No. 99-101 to indicate

that any electronic correspondence sent by "instant messenger" or similar means also would be considered a telephone call, regardless of whether such forms of communication are prearranged.

Web Site Information. (I) It is permissible for an institution's web site or an athletic department staff member's personal web site to include information related to the institution's athletics programs and a hyperlink to the institution's athletics web site, provided neither the institution's web site nor the athletics department staff member's personal web site contains: (1) information regarding prospective student-athletes, except as permitted under Bylaw 13.11.8; (2) any hyperlink to the web site of a recruiting/scouting service or a noninstitutional publication that reports primarily on the institution's athletics program; (3) recruiting videos or other audio/video materials.

Use of Video Clips of Prospects During Announcement of Signing: (I) It is permissible for an institution to show video clips of a prospect through its normal media outlets (e.g., television, web sites) during its announcement of the prospect's signing, provided such publicity occurs only after the prospect has signed a National Letter of Intent or subsequent to the prospect's signed acceptance of the institution's written offer of admission and/or financial aid with the institution.

Further, an institution may produce a single highlight film (per sport) that includes all of its signed prospects to show to its boosters in conjunction with booster club functions. The subcommittee noted that although other prospects may appear in the video clips, the focus of the clip must be related to the prospect who has committed to the institution.

Institutional Web Site Links to Noninstitutional Publication/ Recruiting Service : It is not permissible for an institution's web site to provide a hyperlink (i.e., direct link) or make direct reference to either the web site of a noninstitutional publication that reports primarily on the institution's athletics program or a recruiting/ scouting service, inasmuch as such activity is considered to be a nonpermissible endorsement of the publication and/or scouting/ recruiting service.

Coaching Staff Member Contacting Prospect Through Video Conference/VideoPhone (Division II). The subcommittee determined that it would be permissible for an institution's coaching staff member to engage in a face-to-face contact with a prospective student-athlete via a videoconference or video telephone and that such contact would constitute one of the three permissible contacts.

Computer Recruiting Presentations : (I) It is not permissible for members of an institution's coaching staff to show prospects computer recruiting presentations (e.g., using presentation software) during the recruiting process.

What is a Prospective Student Athlete: A prospective student-athlete "prospect" is a student who has started classes for the ninth grade. In addition, a student who has not started classes for the ninth grades becomes a prospect student athlete if the institution provides such an individual any financial assistant or other benefits that the institution does not provide to prospective students generally.

An individual remains a prospective student-athlete until one of the following occurs. 1. The individual officially registers and enrolls in a minimum full-time program of studies and attends classes in any term of a four-year collegiate institution's regular academic year. 2. The individual participates in a regular squad practice or competition at a four-year collegiate institution that occurs before the beginning of any term.

When should a student register with the NCAA Eligibility Center?
Students should register with the Eligibility Center at the beginning of their junior year in high school. At the end of the student's junior year, a transcript, which includes six semesters of grades, should be sent to the Eligibility Center from the high school. Additionally, students should have their SAT or ACT scores forwarded directly to the Eligibility Center whenever they take exam.

What requirements do student athletes need to practice, play, and get a scholarship from a university?
1. Graduate from high school. 2. Complete a minimum of 16 core courses. 3. Present the reguired GPA. 4. Present a qualifying test score on either the ACT or SAT. 5. Complete the amateurism questionnaire and request final amateurism certification.

How is a core GPA calculated? A core GPA is calculated by the average of a student's best grades achieved for all required core courses.

How is the NCAA core GPA different from a student's overall GPA? The NCAA core course GPA is calculated using only NCAA-approved core courses in the required number of core units. High school GPA's generally include the grades from most or all courses attempted in grades nine through 12.

Definition of a redshirt?
The term "redshirt" is used to describe a student-athlete who does not participate in competition in a sport for an entire academic year. If you do not compete in a sport the entire academic year, you have not used a season of competition.

For example, if you are a qualifier, and you attend a four-year college your freshman year, and you practice but do not compete against outside competition, you still have the next four years to play four seasons of competition.

Each student is allowed no more than four seasons of competition per sport. If you were not a qualifier, you may have fewer seasons of competition available to you. You should know that NCAA rules indicate that any competition, regardless of time, during a season counts as one of your seasons of competition in that sport. It does not matter how long you were involved in a particular competition (for example, one play in a football game, one point in a volleyball match); you will be charged with one season of competition.

Information gathered from the official web site for the NCAA at ncaa.org.

The difference between unofficial and official visits:
Official visits are all-expense paid trips to a university in which a prospect is invited to take a closer look at everything a specific school has to offer including tours of all facilities, meetings with coaching staff, academic advisors, etc. A prospect is allowed five official visits to five different schools.

Unofficial visits are solely at the expense of the student-athlete. Players typically take these visits during football season for a game to catch a game-day atmosphere. Student-athletes may take them at any time as long as they are follow the guidelines of designated times for on-campus visits. ■

HOT LIST

2009 Alabama Football Prospects

2009 Alabama Football Prospects as determined by Andrew Bone of 'BAMA Magazine and Scout Media

Name	Pos.	Hgt.	Wgt.	Time	Hometown (High School)
*Jonathan Atchison,	SLB	6-3	215	4.6	Atlanta (Douglass)
Jordan Barnes,	LB	6-0	225	4.6	Ft. Wayne, Ind. (Homestead)
Kenny Bell,	WR	6-1	170	4.5	Rayville, La.
*Chris Bonds,	DE	6-4	275	4.8	Columbia, S.C. (Richland NE)
*Michael Bowman,	WR	6-5	220	4.6	Rossville, Ga. (Ridgeland)
Chad Bumphis,	WR	5-10	180	4.4	Tupelo, Miss.
William Campbell,	OT	6-4	327	N/A	Detroit, Mich. (Cass Technical)
*James Carpenter,	OT	6-5	305	5.0	Hephzibah, Ga. (Coffeyville, Kan., CC)
Terrence Coleman,	DT	6-1	251	4.8	Mobile (Williamson)
Montrell Conner,	RB	6-1	210	4.5	Monroe, La. (Ouachita Parish)
Fletcher Cox,	DE	6-4	238	4.6	Yazoo City, Miss.
*Quinton Dial,	DT	605	310	5.1	Pinson (Clay-Chalkville)
Jonathan Edwards,	CB	5-9	185	4.5	Tuscaloosa (Central)
Willie Ferrell,	LB	6-2	222	N/A	Tallahassee, Fla. (Florida A&M)
*D.J. Fluker,	DE	6-6	327	4.9	Foley
Eric Gordon,	CB	5-11	186	4.4	Nashville (Hillsboro)
Mardrecas Hood,	WR	6-3	180	4.5	Reform (Pickens Co.)
Jamar Hornsby,	S	6-2	210	4.5	Scooba, Miss. (East Mississippi CC)
Janzen Jackson,	CB	6-1	185	4.4	Lake Charles, La. (Barbe)
*Nico Johnson,	LB	6-2	230	4.6	Andalusia
Kendall Kelly,	WR	6-4	205	4.5	Gadsden (Gadsden City)
Greg King,	LB	6-3	205	N/A	Memphis (Melrose)
Dre Kirkpatrick,	CB	6-3	180	4.5	Gadsden (Gadsden City)
Eddie Lacy,	RB	6-0	210	4.4	Geismar, La. (Dutchtown)
Craig Loston,	S	6-1	190	4.5	Houston (Eisenhower)
*A.J. McCarron,	QB	6-4	180	4.8	Mobile (St. Paul's)
*Darius McKeller,	OT	6-6	295	N/A	Jonesboro, Ga.
*Mike Marrow,	FB	6-1	235	4.7	New Albany, Ohio
Bobby Massie,	OT	6-7	330	N/A	Chathom, Va. (Hargrave Military)
*William Ming,	DE	6-4	230	4.7	Athens
Barkevious Mingo,	LB	6-4	200	4.6	West Monroe, La.
Brandon Moore,	OT	6-5	310	N/A	Montgomery (Carver)
Clint Moseley,	QB	6-4	196	4.7	Leroy
Morgan Moses,	OT	6-7	332	N/A	Richmond, Va. (Meadowbrook)
Darren Myles,	S	6-2	180	4.5	Atlanta (Carver)
Kevin Norwood,	WR	6-3	180	4.5	Biloxi, Miss. (D'Iberville)
*Anthony Orr,	DE	6-4	261	4.8	Harvest (Sparkman)
Tana Patrick,	LB	6-4	220	4.6	Stevenson (North Jackson)
Jamal Patterson,	WR	6-2	189	4.56	McDonough, Ga. (Henry Co.)
Pat Patterson,	WR	6-2	215	4.6	Macon, Miss. (Noxubee Co.)
Rueben Randle,	WR	6-3	195	4.5	Bastrop, La.
*Trent Richardson,	RB	5-11	210	4.5	Pensacola (Escambia)
Gene Robinson,	S	5-10	180	4.5	Memphis (Whitehaven)
Jonathan Scott,	S	6-4	195	4.6	Daytona Beach, Fla. (Seabreeze)
*Darrington Sentimore,	DT	6-2	266	4.8	Destrehan, La.
Charles Skiddoway,	OT	6-6	305	5.3	Eugene, Ore. (South Eugene)
Branden Smith,	CB	6-0	180	4.4	Atlanta (Washington)
Petey Smith,	LB	6-0	248	4.7	Seffner, Fla. (Armwood)
Ed Stinson,	DE	6-5	230	4.7	Homestead, Fla. (South Dade)
*Anthony Steen,	OG	6-4	295	N/A	Clarksdale, Miss. (Lee Acad.)
Jonathan Stewart,	LB	6-4	225	4.6	Shreveport, La. (Byrd)
Marsalis Teague,	CB	5-10	175	4.5	Paris, Tenn. (Henry Co.)
Frankie Telfort,	LB	5-11	197	4.55	Miami (Gulliver Prep)
JAMAR TRAVIS,	DT	6-1	290	N/A	EAST BREWTON (W.S. NEAL)
Olivier Vernon,	DE	6-2	230	4.5	Miami (American)
*Chance Warmack,	OG	6-4	230	N/A	Atlanta (Westlake)
*Gerald West,	CB	5-10	170	4.45	Mobile (Davidson)
*Kellen Williams,	OT	6-5	288	N/A	Snellville, Ga. (Brookwood)
Ronnie Wingo,	RB	6-1	215	4.6	St. Louis, Mo. (University)
*Rod Woodson,	S	5-11	200	4.5	Olive Branch, Miss.

* Committed to Alabama

Wallace Wade (left) handed reins to Frank Thomas

Bryant Museum

HISTORY *BY LEWIS BOWLING*

Wade Started Tradition

Alabama's first Bear 'got the ball rolling'

The hiring of Wallace Wade established Alabama as a storied name in national football circles. None other than the authority Paul "Bear" Bryant said, "Coach Wade's teams got the ball rolling around here. There is no question about that. There is no doubt that his teams back then are more responsible than anybody else for the tradition we have. I hold all of those Alabama teams back then in reverence."

Wade, ever a modest man, later on said, "I would not go so far as saying we started tradition at Alabama, but I admit we had a solid hand in it."

Former 'BAMA Magazine writer and Tuscaloosa News sports editor and prolific author of Crimson Tide books, the late Al Browning, agreed with Bryant, writing, "Wade led Alabama to its thundering entrance to national acclaim, spawning Crimson Tide tradition as we know it."

Keith Dunnavant, an Alabama football historian and writer, adds that Wade transformed the Crimson Tide into a national power.

Wayne Hester, former executive sports editor of the Birmingham News, wrote, "A 'Bear' led Alabama football through its first great era and established the rich tradition of the Crimson Tide. No, not that Bear. This Bear was Wallace Wade. Some people call him the Godfather of Alabama football, but his players called him the Bear."

Yes, there was a Bear on the Alabama campus before Bear Bryant. The first four conference championships and first three national titles in Alabama football history were earned under Wallace Wade.

Bear Bryant arrived on campus at Alabama in the fall of 1931. Bryant had fallen in love with the program of Wallace Wade's, even leaving an all-star game in Dallas on New Year's Day 1931 to listen to Alabama beat Washington State. As he said, "I was in Dallas at an all-star game an Arkansas coach was in, but I caught a street car back to the hotel so I could listen to the Rose Bowl on the radio. The Arkansas people never knew that."

At this time, Alabama football had quite a few players from Arkansas. Many had been sent to Tuscaloosa by Jimmy Harlen, a Pine Bluff businessman who developed a strong affection for Alabama. But it is doubtful if Bryant would have decided to attend Alabama had it not been for the winning tradition established by Wallace Wade. Listening to the 1926 Rose Bowl involving Alabama's dramatic win over Washington captivated the 12-year-old Bryant, from Moro Bottom, Arkansas.

Wade's departure for Duke disappointed Bryant, but he arrived through the recruiting of Hank Crisp. Bryant, for the rest of his life, admired Coach Crisp. He said, "I practiced with the team as a redshirt freshman. Johnny Cain and I roomed together. We stayed in the gym. All the hell-raisers stayed in the dorm, but I always stayed in the gym. We all had jobs and Cain had a hard one. He had to get me to class every day at Tuscaloosa High. Basically, I was a lazy fat-butt who could barely read and write. [Bryant had enrolled at Tuscaloosa High School in math and other classes to complete requirements for admission to Alabama.] I was in awe of those great players. I was scared, and embarrassed, and broke. Ears Whitworth helped me a lot, but the guy who really saved me was John Tucker. He was older and more experienced than me. When he talked, I listened.

Bryant and Wade became close after Bryant entered the coaching ranks. They called each other quite regularly while Wade was retired and living in Durham, North Carolina, and Bryant was coaching at Alabama from 1958 to 1982. "I expect I knew Coach Wade better than his players ever did because they were all so scared of him," Bryant said. "The first time I really got to talk to him much was when I was at North Carolina Pre-Flight [in the Navy], and he was at Duke." (Bryant coached the Pre-Flight team in 1944 to a 13 to 6 win over Duke, but the head coach of Duke was Eddie Cameron; although Bryant evidently had a chance to talk to Wade. Bryant obviously turned the program at the N.C. Pre-Flight around because the previous year, 1943, Duke clobbered Pre-Flight 42 to 0, again under Cameron.)

Bryant added: "Then, later, when I was coaching at Kentucky in 1949, Coach Wade and I were on a train ride together to San Francisco. We were going to a convention and there were two trains. We got snowbound a few miles from Grand Island, Nebraska, and were stuck for three days. One train was about two miles ahead of us and it was without food and drink. But our train was loaded. We had the best eating and carrying-on you can imagine."

Wade made special visits back to Alabama after he retired from coaching. He came to see games, be inducted into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame, and visit Bryant. During one practice, a highway patrolman had been sent by Bryant to pick up Wade and bring him to the field. The car brought Wade close to where Bryant was conducting practice, and Bryant immediately signaled for his players to gather around the elderly man.

"Boys, this man here is the reason you and I are at The University of Alabama," he told the Bama players.

On another occasion, September 9, 1982, at Legion Field, Duke was playing Alabama. Wade had long been retired, but was invited to the game. Bryant was on the field about 15 minutes before the kickoff, when he was told Wade was in the press box. Frank Dascenzo, long-time sports writer for the Durham Herald-Sun, described what happened:

Bryant, guarded by two Alabama state troopers, came around the Legion Field fences to the press box elevator. When the doors opened behind press row, Bryant stood and greeted Wade. Understand now, this is highly unusual for a head coach to be in the press box moments before his team is to begin a game. In normal situations, Bryant would have been in the Alabama locker room delivering last minute instructions. Bryant wore his black and white checkered houndstooth hat, a sky blue short sleeve shirt and red necktie. Wade had his white cowboy hat on, no tie, but wore a white long sleeve shirt, buttoned at the neck. It was 92 degrees at kickoff. And no wind. The two Southern gentlemen shook hands and began conversing. By this time, the famed Alabama Million Dollar Band had taken the field, and the two teams, through with warm-ups, headed back to their dressing rooms.

When the two men shook hands, a tremor shook the press box. One night in Birmingham the Bear was commanded by the presence of one Wallace Wade. Grown men stood up to get a look and if one person said "excuse me" so did 12 others, all trying to elbow their way to get a glimpse of Wade and Bryant together. The scene had power. It had history. It had winners and it had a heavy overtone, not just for the two schools but for college football. One night in Birmingham, two men commanded an audience that, if stares were of monetary value, everyone would have gone home a millionaire.

Bryant stayed, and stayed. The captains came on the field for the coin toss and less than three minutes remained on the scoreboard clock. Bryant and Wade were eyeball to eyeball, laughing. Wade chuckled, then Bryant. Wade pointed, then Bryant pointed.

Miraculously, the Bear made it down to the sidelines in time to see the kickoff. Duke played an excellent first half and trailed only 14-12. It is assumed Bryant had a few choice words at half-time because the final score was 35-12.

I've often wondered if they'd have held up the start of the game that night if Bryant had remained upstairs talking with Wade. I guess they would have.

In 1980 Wade came back to Tuscaloosa for a 50th reunion of the 1930 team. He was a man then 88 years of age, but still as sharp as could be. Bear Bryant

Wallace Wade

Bryant Museum

was close to retirement himself. The first Alabama Bear, Wallace Wade, and Bear Bryant, the most successful coach in the country, found time to talk alone, the two men most responsible for Alabama being at the top of the college football world. It's not known exactly what the two talked about-probably it included the 1930 team, Bryant's 1980 team and prospects for the future, how Wade was enjoying retirement, that train trip they took together and ended up stranded in the middle of Nebraska, Hank Crisp, Johnny Mack Brown, how much longer Bryant would coach, and changes in the game over the years, the good and bad. One thing is for sure, coaching greatness sat side by side as Coach Wade and Coach Bryant talked that day in Alabama in 1980.

Wallace Wade and Paul Bryant conversed frequently

Bryant Museum

Wallace Wade's impact on the Alabama football program will forever be felt. He established the tradition of outstanding football in Tuscaloosa. His record speaks for itself. He won over 80 per cent of his games, won the first four conference championships in the history of Alabama football, won its first three national titles. He won what many football historians call the most important game in the history of Southern football: the 1926 Rose Bowl. All-Americans played for him, such as Pooley Hubert, Fred Sington, and Johnny Cain. A movie star played for him-Johnny Mack Brown. These players and others generated enormous publicity for The University of Alabama, and there is no doubt that the growing enrollment of students during the 1920s was due in large part to the national acclaim of Wade's teams. Denny Stadium, what is now Bryant-Denny Stadium, was started with funds from the 1926 and 1927 Rose Bowl games. Alabama's mascot, the elephant, was started with the 1930 game.

Wade was an innovative coach. He was one of the first football coaches to have his own radio show, on WAPI in Birmingham. The 1927 Rose Bowl was the first national broadcast of a football game on radio. Year-round conditioning was not practiced in the South before Wade started it at Vanderbilt and continued it at Alabama. His coaching schools were among the first to appear, and his network of high school coaches who had played for him was among the most extensive recruiting tools of any school in the country. His use of low cut shoes, especially on the Dothan Antelope, Johnny Mack Brown, to increase speed, was a strange look in an era of high top shoes. Wade even got a shoe salesman to experiment with different types of athletic shoes, in one instance placing football cleats on baseball shoes. Lighter padding that still offered ample protection was introduced by Wade. In practices, Wade used a metronome, being such a stickler for precise timing. He was sought after for his defensive genius and his kicking game knowledge.

Wade picked his successor, Frank Thomas, who went on to coaching greatness at Alabama. Probably most notable of all, is that the fame of his great teams reached over state lines to capture the imagination of a young country boy growing up in Arkansas. As Allen Barra wrote in The Last Coach, "Bryant, who would become as awe-inspiring as any coach to ever step onto a college field, never got over his awe of Wallace Wade."

Bear Bryant never got to play for Alabama's first bear, Wallace Wade, but Wade was certainly a huge factor in Bryant coming to Tuscaloosa.

A former player of Wade's at Alabama, J.B. Whitworth, became head coach at Alabama. Several of his assistant coaches had lasting impact on the program, such as Hank Crisp, Paul Burnum, and Carney Laslie.

Sure, Wade left Alabama. Maybe he did feel a little unappreciated after having less than stellar years between 1927 to 1929. He still produced good teams in 1927, 1928, and 1929, but directly because of Wade, Alabama fans wanted championships every year. Wade's early success worked against him in this respect. So he decided to leave; more money beckoned, the chance to have total control over his program, and the opportunity to start anew all factored into his decision. But he honored his contract, gave Alabama a parting gift of yet another national title, and never uttered a negative word about the university he had grown to love. In fact, in many interviews in years to come after leaving Tuscaloosa, he had only praise for Alabama. He chose for Alabama the best coach in the country available to continue what he had started, Frank Thomas.

Bear Bryant will always be the coach against whom others are measured at Alabama, and rightfully so. Coach Bryant is an icon; his success and personality captured the imagination of Crimson Tide football fans everywhere. Grown men don hounds-tooth hats just to show their support for the great coach; young boys dream of what it would have been to play for him, even today, more than a quarter century after his death.

William Wallace Wade, the first Bear to stalk the Alabama sidelines, will forever be remembered as the "godfather of Alabama football. "He started the greatness that shook the college football world. He will never, and should never, be forgotten. As Henry Wadsworth Longfellow tells us:

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us,
Footprints on the sands of time.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Lewis Bowling is author of "Wallace Wade: Championship Years at Alabama and Duke," and this article is from that book. The book is available at University Supply Store and Bryant Museum on the campus of The University of Alabama or by calling (919) 489-7486. ■

'BAMA Scorecard

Notebooking Crimson Tide Sports

Guest Analysts

With all-time Alabama great Kenny Stabler taking the year off from his duties as Crimson Tide football radio color analyst, the network decided to have guest analysts during the 2008 season. Eli Gold is play-by-play man, veteran Alabama broadcaster Tom Roberts took over as analyst, and former Tide star Barry Krauss is the sideline commentator. And each week a former Alabama football player was a part of the broadcast team.

The guest analysts were: For Clemson Antonio Langham, Tulane Roger Schultz, Western Kentucky Prince Wimbley, Arkansas Tyler Watts, Georgia Chris Mohr, Kentucky Sam Shade, Ole Miss Kermit Kendrick, Tennessee Jerry Duncan, Arkansas State Fred Sington Jr., LSU Bob Baumhower, Mississippi State Tony Johnson, Auburn Steadman Shealy, and the Southeastern Conference Championship Game against Florida Andrew Zow.

Baseball Watch

Alabama junior Brandon May has been named to the 2009 Brooks Wallace Award Watch List, the College Baseball Foundation and Hall of Fame announced.

The Wallace Award has been presented annually since 2004 to the best college baseball player. The award is dedicated to the memory of former Texas Tech player and assistant coach Brooks Wallace. Wallace was a slick-fielding shortstop at Texas Tech from 1977 to 1980. A four-year starter, he was named All-Southwest Conference and All-District his senior year. He led the Red Raiders to their first-ever appearance in the Southwest Conference Tournament in 1980.

"Brandon May is certainly deserving of this recognition," Alabama Coach Jim Wells said. "He is an outstanding player. He

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had a great year for us last year, hitting in the middle of the lineup, and we expect good things from him this season. He is also one of the leaders on this team."

A first-team All-Southeastern Conference selection in 2008 by the league's head coaches, May was second on the team with a .365 (92 for 252) average with nine home runs and 50 RBI in a team-high 63 games played. He also led Alabama with 18 doubles. In 30 SEC games, he batted .369 (45 for 122) with seven home runs and 18 RBI.

In 112 career games, May has compiled a .328 (131 for 400) batting average with nine home runs and 63 RBI. He enters the 2009 season with 87 consecutive starts, the longest active streak among Tide players. During his two-year career, he has started nine post-season games and is hitting .306 (11 for 36) with one double, five RBI and seven runs scored.

Top Ten Finish

Although it may not have been as good as hoped for, there is no reason for Coach Joe Walker's Alabama men's cross country team to be anything but proud of its season. Alabama was ranked fifth in the nation, but hoped to buck the odds and win the national championship at the meet in Terren Haute, Indiana. It wasn't to be. Alabama finished 10th.

For one thing, it was hardly Alabama weather for the meet, a high in the 30s, wind in the 20s, and rain.

Still, it was the first time Alabama has put together back-to-back top ten finishes in the NCAA Championship meet.

"I think this was basically a solidifier that we've been a top 10 team all season long," Track and Field Coach Harvey Glance said. "Even though these guys were off from the way we've been competing all year long, they still came out and did what they're supposed to do and competed from start to finish. The guys did a good job hanging in there and battling in difficult conditions and staying strong mentality. I'm real proud of having another top 10 finish in our program and capping off a great year. It's been one heck of a run."

The men were led by Emmanuel Bor who just missed All-America honors in 48th place with a time of 30:25.00. He was closely followed by Augustus Maiyo (57th) and Tyson David (63rd) who turned in times of 30:32.60 and 30:34.90, respectively. Abraham Kutingala (107th) and Andrew Kirwa (118th) rounded out the top five for the Tide crossing the line with times of 30:57.80 and 31:02.90, respectively. Zac Edwards finished with a time of 33:00.00 in 246th place.

"Honestly for us, it was pretty tough day," Walker said. "We really didn't put it together the way we felt we would so we're disappointed and yet we know we had a great season. We didn't show what we thought we could show. No excuses though, it just didn't happen. From here, we've got to move forward and put this one behind us."

Oregon repeated as national champion.

Alabama won the SEC and South Region NCAA championships.

Golf Rankings

Both the Alabama men's and women's teams were ranked in the nation's top ten at the conclusion of fall play. The Alabama men's golf team moved up three spots in the final fall Golf World/Nike Golf Coaches' poll. Coach Jay Seawell's team moved from number six to number three after a strong performance at the UCF Isleworth Collegiate Invitational in late October. The Crimson Tide finished ahead of five other top 10 teams en route to a second place finish behind top-ranked Georgia.

On the women's side, Coach Mic Potter's Bama squad wrapped up its fall season ranked fifth in the Golfweek/Sagarin Power Index, tied for the team's highest ranking of the season. The Tide is ranked number six in the final Golf Digest Coaches' Poll of the fall. Alabama women's golf was a mainstay in the top 10 of both polls throughout the fall season.

In men's competition, Georgia moved to number one in the final polls, jumping Oklahoma State. The Bulldogs garnered 23 of a possible 24 first-place votes and 599 total points. The Cowboys were second with 543 points and the Crimson Tide third with 533. Southern California received the other first-place vote and finished with 531 total points. Stanford rounded out the top five with 455 points.

Alabama and Georgia lead a contingent of six Southeastern Conference schools in the top 25 with Arkansas at nine (335), Florida at 12 (277), South Carolina at 14 (251) and Tennessee at 16 (193). LSU, Auburn and Mississippi are also received votes.

The Crimson Tide posted a strong fall schedule with a win at the Jerry Pate National Intercollegiate, a second-place showing at the UFC Isleworth Collegiate Invitational, a fifth-place finish at the Ping/Golfweek Preview and a sixth at the Carpet Capital Collegiate Classic.

Alabama opens its spring slate on February 22 at the John Hayt Collegiate Invitational at the Sawgrass Country Club in Jacksonville, Florida.

The Alabama women's team competed in five fall events and had four top five finishes.

UA finished second out of 22 teams at the Cougar Classic shooting 863, the second lowest 54-hole score in school history. The Tide took second at the Hooter's Match Play Championship in Celebration, Florida, the final event of fall play. Alabama earned the third seed in the match play portion of the event by taking third place in a 36-hole stroke play competition. The Tide fell to Duke in a hard-fought championship match.

Sophomore Camilla Lennarth led the team in scoring during the fall with 73.08 average per 18 holes. Senior Kathleen Ekey and newcomer Brooke Pancake each had two top 10 finishes, tied for the team lead.

Alabama opens up the spring season at the University of Central Florida Invitational in Sorrento, Florida. The tournament is slated to run March 8-10.

All-Conference

Alabama volleyball's Brooks Webster, a junior outside hitter, was selected to the Southeastern Conference's first team, the seventh Crimson Tide player in history to be honored with such distinction.

"This is a great honor for Brooks," said Coach Judy Green. "She took some very good strides this season in becoming one of the best outside hitters in the SEC."

Webster, a native of Baltimore, anchored the Alabama offense with 424 kills which was more than any other player in the SEC. She stood atop the league's list of kill leaders for weeks, and she finished the season at number one with 4.17 per set. Her closest competitor averaged 3.80 kills per frame.

Over the course of the year, Webster collected 11 double-doubles and finished with double-digit kills 22 times. She also upped her career high in kills and attempts, with 26 and 69 respectively, in a matchup against Georgia. In addition, Webster earned a career high four assists in back-to-back games against Tennessee and Auburn.

Defensively, she was a force, scooping up 287 digs and collecting 45 blocks. Webster picked up 23 digs, a career best, against 10th-ranked Florida. At the net, she rejected 16 attacks on her own and teamed up for an additional 28 block assists.

Webster earned honors in every tournament the Tide played in this season. She was named to the Hampton Inn Bama Bash All-Tournament Team as well as the Hurricane Invitational All-Tournament Team. In Alabama's final tournament before conference play, Webster was crowned MVP of the Crimson Tide Invitational after posting 44 kills, 24 digs and seven blocks over the course of the three matches.

Fast Swims

Alabama junior All-America Mark Randall capped an outstanding weekend at the USA Short Course National Swimming Championships in Atlanta in early December with a silver medal finish in the mile.

Randall, one of the nation's top distance swimmers, finished with a time of 15:00.83, more than six seconds ahead of the rest of the field.

Randall finished third in the 500 freestyle on day one of the USA Short Course National Championships in the Georgia Tech Aquatic Center.

Randall posted a season-best time of 4:17.34, coming in just behind the Michigan duo of Matt Patton and Tyler Clary. The Tide distance ace shaved half a second off his previous best this season, which led the nation coming into the weekend. Sophomore Catalin Cosma shaved five seconds off his season-best time, touching the wall at 4:26.03 to finish 13th at the championships.

"We had a great weekend, turning some great swims, including several life-time best times," Coach Eric McIlquham said. "At this point in the season, it's a very good indicator of where we are and what we can accomplish if we keep working hard and stay focused on the championship season." ■

2008-09 Alabama Winter Sports Schedules

Men's & Women's Track & Field

DATE	EVENT
Jan. 9-10	@ Clemson Invitational (W)
Jan. 17	Kentucky Invitational (M)
Jan. 24	Arkansas Invitational (M)
Jan. 31	@ Nebraska Invitational (W)
Feb. 6-7	Meyo Invitational (M&W)
Feb. 6-7	@ Kentucky Invitational (W)
Feb. 13-14	@ Arkansas Invitational (W)
Feb. 14	Washington Invitational (M)
Feb. 27-	SEC Championships
March 1	@ Lexington, Ky. (M&W)
March 13-14	NCAA Championships
	@ College Station, Texas (M&W)

Men's and Women's Swimming & Diving

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
Sept. 27	Delta State (M&W) & Vanderbilt (W)	1:00
Oct. 11	@ FSU	Noon
Oct. 24	@ SMU Classic (W)	6:00
Nov. 7	@ LSU	3:00
Nov. 8	Centenary & UNO @ New Orleans	11:00
Nov. 14	Western Kentucky	3:00
Nov. 20	@ Georgia Tech diving	TBA
Nov. 21	Auburn	All Day
Dec. 4	US Short @ Atlanta	All Day
Dec. 18	@ Auburn diving	TBA
Jan. 3	@ Tennessee diving	TBA
Jan. 17	@ Kentucky	1:00
Jan. 31	South Carolina & Georgia	1:00
Feb. 18	SEC Championships @ Auburn	All Day
Feb. 28	@ Georgia Invite	All Day
March 8	@ Auburn Invite	All Day
March 13	NCAA Zone Diving, Knoxville	
March 26	NCAA Championships @ College Station, Texas	

Gymnastics

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
Jan. 9	@ Auburn	7:00
Jan. 16	Kentucky	7:30
Jan. 23	@ Georgia	6:30
Jan. 27	@ Arkansas	7:00
Feb. 6	Denver	7:30
Feb. 13	LSU	7:30
Feb. 20	@ Florida	6:00
Feb. 27	Auburn	7:30
March 1	Penn State & Ohio State @ Penn State	1:00
March 6	Stanford	7:30
March 13	North Carolina & Oklahoma	7:30
March 21	SEC Championships @ Nashville	4:00
April 4	NCAA Regionals	6:00
April 16-18	NCAA Championships @ Lincoln, Neb.	

Men's Basketball

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
Nov. 2	Crimson-White Exh.	4:00
Nov. 6	Faulkner Exh.	7:00
Nov. 13	Belhaven Exh.	7:00
Nov. 16	Mercer	6:00
Nov. 19	Florida A&M	8:00 (CSS)
Nov. 24-26	Maui Invitational	
Nov. 24	Oregon	11:00
Nov. 25	North Carolina or Chalminade	TBA
Nov. 26	Texas, St. Joseph's, Notre Dame or Indiana	TBA
Dec. 2	Alabama A&M	7:00
Dec. 6	Louisiana-Lafayette	6:00
Dec. 13	Texas A&M	7:00 (CSS)
Dec. 17	Tennessee State	7:00 (CSS)
Dec. 22	Chattanooga	7:00
Dec. 28	Yale	6:00
Dec. 30	Quincy	7:00
Jan. 3	Georgia Tech	2:00 (FoxS)
Jan. 6	@ Clemson	8:00 (FoxS)
Jan. 11	LSU	12:30 or 3:00 (Raycom)
Jan. 14	@ Mississippi State	7:00
Jan. 17	@ Auburn	1:00
Jan. 21	Ole Miss	7:00
Jan. 24	Kentucky	2:00 (Raycom)
Jan. 29	@ Arkansas	8:00 (ESPN)
Jan. 31	Georgia	6:00 (FoxS)
Feb. 5	@ Vanderbilt	6:00 (ESPN)
Feb. 8	@ LSU	Noon (Raycom)
Feb. 14	South Carolina	2:00 (Raycom)
Feb. 18	@ Florida	6:00
Feb. 21	Mississippi State	2:00 (Raycom)
Feb. 25	Arkansas	7:00
Feb. 28	@ Ole Miss	3:00 (Raycom)
March 3	Auburn	8:00 (ESPN)
March 8	@ Tennessee	11:00 (CBS)
March 12-15	SEC Tournament @ Tampa, Fla.	

Women's Basketball

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
Nov. 8	West Alabama	TBA
Nov. 14	Centenary	TBA
Nov. 18	Samford	TBA
Nov. 22	@ Hampton	TBA
Nov. 25	Alabama State	TBA
Nov. 28-29	@ Nuggett Classic, Reno, Nev.	
Dec. 3	UCF	TBA
Dec. 7	Sam Houston State	TBA
Dec. 14	@ MTSU	TBA
Dec. 17	Florida A&M	
Dec. 22	Austin Peay	TBA
Dec. 29-30	Tide Holiday Classic	
Dec. 29	Belmont	TBA
Dec. 30	Ball State or Richmond	TBA
Jan. 3	@ SE Louisiana	TBA
Jan. 8	Vanderbilt	7:00
Jan. 11	@ LSU	2:00
Jan. 15	Kentucky	TBA
Jan. 18	@ Ole Miss	2:00
Jan. 22	@ Auburn	8:00
Jan. 25	Georgia	2:00
Feb. 1	@ Vanderbilt	2:00
Feb. 5	Florida	TBA
Feb. 8	Auburn	2:00
Feb. 12	@ Tennessee	6:00
Feb. 15	@ South Carolina	2:00
Feb. 19	Ole Miss	6:00
Feb. 22	@ Arkansas	2:00
March 1	Mississippi State	TBA
March 5-8	SEC Tournament@ North Little Rock, Ark.	

2009 Alabama Spring Sports Schedules

Baseball

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
Feb. 20	Southeast Missouri	6:35
Feb. 21	Southeast Missouri	4:05
Feb. 22	Southeast Missouri	2:05
Feb. 24	Nicholls State	6:35
Feb. 25	Nicholls State	6:35
Feb. 27	Illinois-Chicago	6:35
Feb. 28	Illinois-Chicago (DH)	1:05
Mar. 1	Illinois-Chicago	1:05
Mar. 3	@ Troy	6:00
Mar. 5-7	Whataburger Classic @ Corpus Christi	
Mar. 10	Auburn @ Montgomery	6:30
Mar. 11	Samford	6:35
Mar. 13	Georgia	6:35
Mar. 14	Georgia	4:05
Mar. 15	Georgia	2:05
Mar. 17	Alabama A&M	6:35
Mar. 18	Alabama A&M	6:35
Mar. 20	@ Ole Miss	6:30
Mar. 21	@ Ole Miss	1:30
Mar. 22	@ Ole Miss	1:30
Mar. 24	UAB	6:35
Mar. 25	UAB @ Hoover	6:30
Mar. 27	@ Florida	5:30
Mar. 28	@ Florida	3:00
Mar. 29	@ Florida	Noon
Mar. 31	SE Louisiana	6:35
Apr. 1	Mississippi Valley	6:35
Apr. 3	Tennessee	6:35
Apr. 4	Tennessee	4:05
Apr. 5	Tennessee	2:05
Apr. 7	Troy	6:35
Apr. 10	LSU	6:35
Apr. 11	LSU	4:05
Apr. 12	LSU	2:05
Apr. 14	Mississippi Valley	6:35
Apr. 15	@ Samford	6:30
Apr. 17	@ Vanderbilt	6:00
Apr. 18	@ Vanderbilt	3:00
Apr. 19	@ Vanderbilt	1:00
Apr. 22	@ South Alabama	6:00
Apr. 24	Kentucky	6:35
Apr. 25	Kentucky	4:05
Apr. 26	Kentucky	2:05
Apr. 29	South Alabama	6:35
May 1	@ Mississippi State	6:30
May 2	@ Mississippi State	6:30
May 3	@ Mississippi State	1:30
May 8	Arkansas	6:35
May 9	Arkansas	4:35
May 10	Arkansas	2:05
May 14	@ Auburn	6:00
May 15	@ Auburn	6:00
May 16	@ Auburn	3:00
May 20-24	SEC Tournament	@ Hoover
May 29-31	NCAA Regionals	
June 5-8	NCAA Super Regionals	
June 13-24	College World Series	@ Omaha

Men's & Women's Track & Field

DATE	EVENT
Mar. 26	Alabama Relays
Mar. 27	Stanford Inv. (W)
Apr. 3	Florida Relays
Apr. 11	Ole Miss Inv.
Apr. 23	Drake Relays
May 2	Mississippi Open
May 2	@ Stanford (M)
May 14	SEC Championships @ Gainesville
May 29	NCAA Mideast @ Louisville
June 10	NCAA Championships @ Fayetteville

Softball

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
Feb. 7	@ South Alabama Classic	
Feb. 13	BAMA BASH (Notre Dame, East Carolina, Wisconsin) Palm Springs Classic	
Feb. 19	BYU	12:30
Feb. 19	Oregon	6:00
Feb. 20	UCLA	8:00
Feb. 21	Oklahoma	5:30
Feb. 21	Hawaii	8:00
Feb. 27	Leadoff Classic @ Columbus, Ga.	
Mar. 4	@ UAB	6:30
Mar. 6	Washington	6:00
Mar. 7	Washington	1:30
Mar. 7	Baylor	4:00
Mar. 8	Baylor	1:30
Mar. 12	Mississippi Valley	6:30
Mar. 14	Mississippi State (DH)	1:00
Mar. 15	Mississippi State	1:30
Mar. 18	@ LSU (DH)	5:00
Mar. 21	@ Ole Miss (DH)	TBA
Mar. 22	@ Ole Miss	TBA
Mar. 25	Samford	6:30
Mar. 28	@ Florida (DH)	TBA
Mar. 29	@ Florida	TBA
Apr. 1	Troy	6:00
Apr. 4	Georgia (DH)	1:00
Apr. 5	Georgia	1:30
Apr. 10	@ South Carolina (DH)	5:00
Apr. 11	@ South Carolina	2:00
Apr. 14	Kentucky (DH)	3:00
Apr. 18	Arkansas (DH)	1:00
Apr. 19	Arkansas	1:30
Apr. 22	@ Georgia Tech	6:00
Apr. 25	Auburn (DH)	1:00
Apr. 26	Auburn	1:30
May 2	@ Tennessee (DH)	1:00
May 3	@ Tennessee	12:30
May 7	SEC Tournament @ Knoxville	
May 15	NCAA Regionals	
May 22	NCAA Super Regionals	
May 28	World Series @ Oklahoma City	

Men's Golf

DATE	EVENT
Feb. 22-24	John Hayt @ Sawgrass
Feb. 27-Mar. 2	Puerto Rico Classic
Mar. 22-24	Callaway Match Play @ Rancho Santa Fe, Calif.
Apr. 5-7	U.S. Collegiate @ Alpharetta, Ga.
Apr. 17-19	SEC Championships @ St. Simon's Island, Ga.
May 14-17	NCAA Regionals
May 27-30	NCAA Championships @ Inverness, Ohio

Women's Golf

DATE	EVENT
Mar. 8-10	Central Florida Inv.
Mar. 21-22	First Market @ Williamsburg
Mar. 27-29	Liz Murphy @ Athens, Ga.
Apr. 6-7	Lady Gator
Apr. 17-19	SEC Championships @ Blythewood, S.C.
May 7-9	NCAA Regionals
May 19-22	NCAA Championships @ Owings Mill, Md.

Men's Tennis

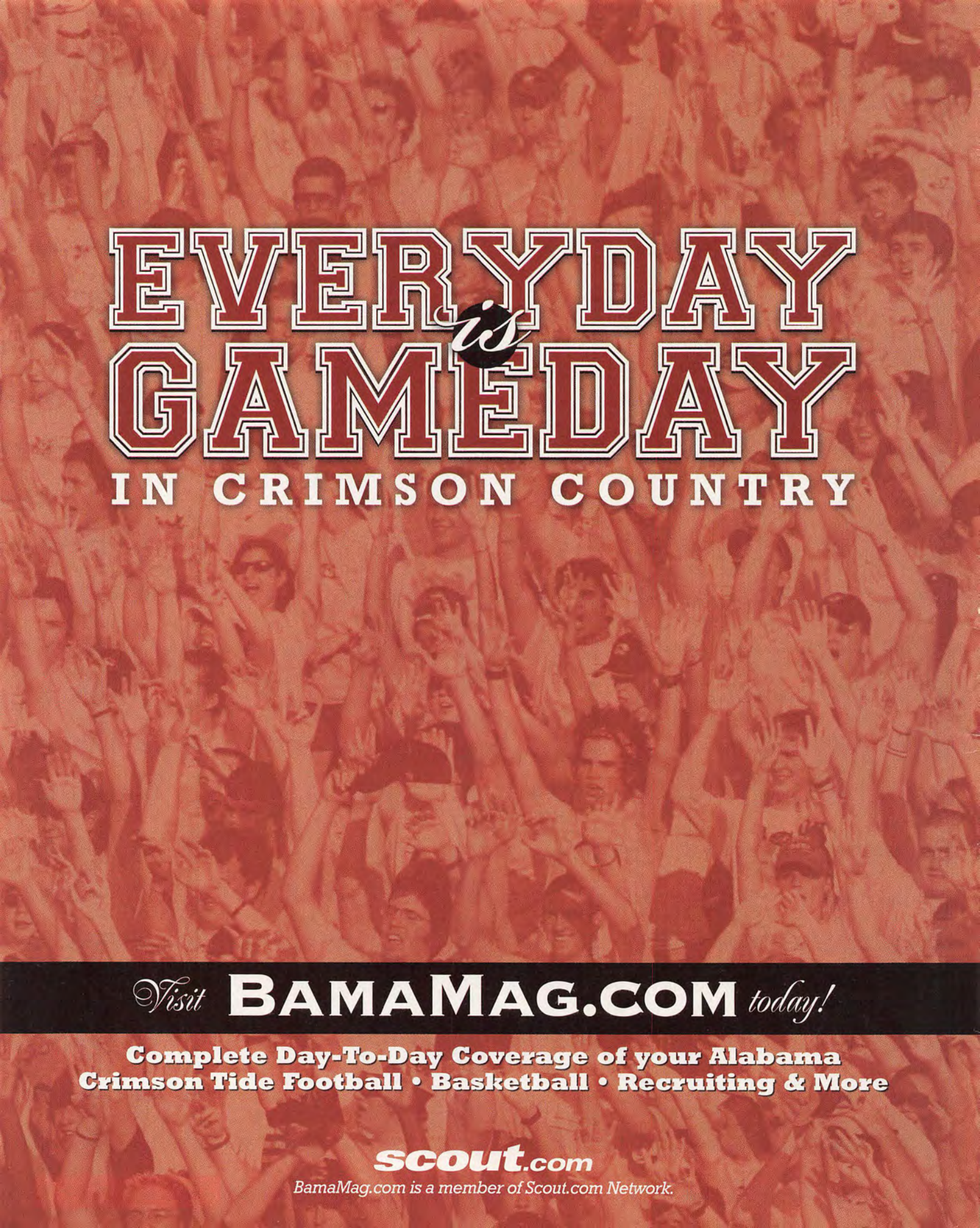
DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
Jan. 9	Key Biscayne Inv.	
Jan. 16	SEC Indoors	
Jan. 24	Troy	10 a.m.
Jan. 24	Furman	3:00
Jan. 31	Miami @ Malibu	2:00
Feb. 1	Indoor @ Malibu	
Feb. 8	Samford	Noon
Feb. 8	UAB	5:00
Feb. 13	Chicago National	
Feb. 15	@ Clemson	1:00
Feb. 21	@ Indiana	1:00
Mar. 1	Memphis	10 a.m.
Mar. 1	Jacksonville State	3:00
Mar. 6	@ Arkansas	1:30
Mar. 8	@ LSU	1:00
Mar. 13	Ole Miss	2:00
Mar. 15	Mississippi State	1:00
Mar. 19	Blue-Gray @ Montgomery	
Mar. 27	@ Kentucky	3:00
Mar. 29	Vanderbilt	1:00
Apr. 3	@ Tennessee	TBA
Apr. 5	@ Georgia	1:00
Apr. 10	Florida	3:00
Apr. 12	South Carolina	1:00
Apr. 18	@ Auburn	5:00
Apr. 23	SEC @ Columbia, S.C.	
May 8	NCAA Regionals	
May 14	NCAA Championships @ College Station, Texas	

Women's Tennis

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
Jan. 16	@ Northwestern Inv.	
Jan. 25	Chattanooga	1:00
Jan. 30	Tulane	4:00
Feb. 1	Georgia State	Noon
Feb. 7	Oklahoma	11:00
Feb. 14	Iowa	Noon
Feb. 22	Samford	10 a.m.
Feb. 22	Southern Miss	3:00
Feb. 28	@ TCU	Noon
Mar. 6	Arkansas	3:00
Mar. 8	LSU	1:00
Mar. 11	Marquette	3:00
Mar. 13	@ Ole Miss	3:00
Mar. 15	@ Mississippi State	1:00
Mar. 23	Oregon	3:00
Mar. 27	Kentucky 3:00	
Mar. 29	@ Vanderbilt	Noon
Apr. 3	Tennessee	3:00
Apr. 5	Georgia	1:00
Apr. 10	@ Florida	2:00
Apr. 12	@ South Carolina	1:00
Apr. 18	Auburn	5:00
Apr. 23	SEC Championships @ Fayetteville	
May 8	NCAA Regionals	
May 15	NCAA Championships @ College Station, Texas	

Rowing

DATE	OPPONENT
Mar. 14	@ Clemson
Mar. 17	Kansas State
Mar. 28	@ Tennessee
Apr. 4	SMU & UNC
Apr. 18	Southern Intercollegiate @ Oak Ridge, Tenn.
May 8	Dad Vail @ Philadelphia
May 16	South/Central Sprints @ Oak Ridge, Tenn.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